The FORTUNES OF GARIN

by

MARY JOHNSTON

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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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THE FORTUNES OF GARIN

THE MEETING BY ST. MARTHA'S WELL

THE FORTUNES OF GARIN

BY

MARY JOHNSTON

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THE FORTUNES OF GARIN

CHAPTER I

ROCHE-DE-FRÊNE

WITHOUT blazed autumn sunshine, strong as summer sunshine in northern lands. Within the cathedral dusk ruled, rich and mysterious. The sanctuary light burned, a star. The candles were yet smoking, the incense yet clung, thick and pungent. Vanishing through the sacristy door went the last flutter of acolyte or chorister. The throng that worshipped dwindled to a few lingering shapes. The rest disappeared by the huge portal, marvellously sculptured. It had been a great throng, for Bishop Ugo had preached. Now the cathedral was almost empty, and more rich, more mysterious because of that. The saints in their niches could be seen the better, and the gold dust from the windows came in unbroken shafts to the pavement. There they splintered and light lay in fragments. One of these patches made a strange glory for the head of Boniface of Beaucaire who was doing penance, stretched out on the pavement like a cross. Lost in the shadows of nave, aisles, and chapels were other penitents, on their knees, muttering prayers. Hugues from

up the river lay on his face, half in light, half in shadow, before the shrine of Saint Martial. Hugues's penance had been heavy, for he was a captain of Free Lances and had beset and robbed a travelling monk. But in Hugues's cavern that night the monk turned preacher and wrought so mightily that he brought Hugues — who was a simple, emotional soul — to his knees, and the next day, when they parted, sent him here for penance. He lay bare to the waist, and his back was bloody from the scourging he had received before the church doors.

The church was a marvel. It had been building for long, long while, and it was not yet finished. It was begun by a grateful population, at the instigation of the then bishop, in the year 1035. All Christendom had set the year 1000 for the Second Coming and the Judgement Day, and as the time approached had waited in deep gloom and with a palsied will for those august arrivals. When the year passed, with miseries enough, but with no rolling back of the firmament like a scroll, it was concluded that what had been meant was the thousandth from the Crucifixion. 1033 was now set for the Final Event, and the neglect of each day, the torpor and terror of the mind, continued. But 1033 passed, marked by nothing more dreadful than famine and common wretchedness. Christendom woke from that particular trance, sighed with relief, and began to grow — to grow with vigour and rapidity, with luxuriance and flourishes.

In 1035, then, the cathedral had been begun, and to-morrow morning, here in the last quarter of the twelfth century, the stone masons would go clinking, clinking up yonder, atop of the first of the two towers. No man really knew when it would be finished. But for a century nave, aisles, choir, and chapels had been completed. Under the wonderful roof three generations of the people of Roche-de-Frêne had bowed themselves when the bell rang and the Host was elevated. The cathedral had the hallowing of time. It was an Inheritance as was the Faith that bred it. The atmosphere of this place was the atmosphere of emotion, and strong as were the pillars, they were no stronger than was the Habit which brought the feet this way and bowed the heads; and clinging and permeating as was the incense, it was no more so than the sentiment that stretched yonder Boniface of Beaucaire and here Hugues the Free Lance. Boniface of Beaucaire would cheat again and Hugues the Free Lance rob and slay, but here they were, no hypocrites, and cleaner in this moment than they had been.

There were two pillars, one twisted, one straight, that had been brought from Palestine by Gaucelm the Crusader, father of Gaucelm the Fortunate, the present Prince, and set on either side the shrine of Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne. A shaft of light from the great window struck across the two, broke, and made the pavement sunny.

Just here knelt a youth, in a squire's dress of green

and brown. He had no penance to perform. He was kneeling because he was in a kneeling mood. The light showed a well-made, supple figure, with powerful shoulders. The head and throat were good, the face rather long, with strong features, the colouring blonde inclining to brown, the eyes grey with blue glints. They were directed now to the image of the Virgin, above him in her niche, the other side of the gold light. She stood, incredibly slender, and taller than human, rose-cheeked, dressed in azure samite sewn with gems, with a crown, and in her two hands a crimson heart pierced by an iron arrow. A lamp burned before her, and there were flowers around.

The youth knelt with a fixed gaze, asking for inspiration. . . . The Virgin of Roche-de-Frêne seemed to move, to dilate, to breathe, to smile! The young man sank his head, stretched forth his arms. "O Our Lady, smile on me! O Our Lady, give me to-day a sign!"

The cathedral grew a place of mystery, of high, transcendent passion. The lamp appeared to brighten, the heart in the two hands to glow.

"Is it a sign that I am to serve Her in Holy Church?" thought Garin de Castel-Noir, "or, mayhap, that I am to serve Her with lance and shield? Is it a sign, or am I mistaken? If it were a sign, would I ask if I were mistaken?" He sighed. "O High God, give me a sign!"

He had to decide no less a thing than his career. Until a little while ago he had thought that matter

settled. He was esquire to a poor lord, a fierce and a stupid lord, and he had no hope but to remain esquire for years perhaps to come. But, come soon or come late, one day his lord would make him knight. That done, and his saint favouring, he might somehow achieve honour. Three months ago his lot had seemed as fixed as that of a fir tree growing below his lord Raimbaut's black keep. Then into the matter had stepped the Abbot of Saint Pamphilius, that was kinsman of Garin and of his brother, Foulque the Cripple, who bided at Castel-Noir.

With simplicity, the squire explained it to Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne: "He is our near kinsman, and he knows how poor are Foulque and I, and he knows, too, Lord Raimbaut, and the little we may expect. And now he says that if I will give up hope of chivalry and take the tonsure, he will be my good patron. And if I work well with head and pen and prove myself able, he will charge himself that I advance and win great promotion. If I serve him well, so will he serve me well. O Our Lady," ended Garin, "he is a great man as you know, and close friend to Bishop Ugo. Moreover, he and Foulque have made application to my lord Raimbaut and won him to consent. And Foulque urges me toward Holy Church. But O Blessed Lady," cried Garin, and stretched forth his arms, "do I wish to go? I know not — I know not!"

The Virgin of Roche-de-Frêne, crowned and daz-

zling, stood in blue samite with her heart and arrow, but said no word and gave no sign. . . . Raimbaut and his knighthood — the Abbot and Holy Church — and Foulque with his song, "Choose the Abbot! Work hard and be supple and further the ends of Holy Church, twining your own ends with that golden cord. No telling to what height you may rise! Great wealth and power fall to them who serve her to her profit and liking. You crave learning. On which road, I put it to you, will you gather most of that?" So Foulque. And Bishop Ugo had preached, this morn, of the glory and power of Holy Church and of the crowns laid up for them who served her.

The squire sighed deeply. He must make decision. The Abbot would not always keep that look of invitation. He had other young and needy kinsmen. Worldly considerations enough flitted through Garin's head, but they found something there beside themselves. "In deep truth, which is mine? To endure until I may ride as knight and find or make some door in a high, thick wall? To take the tonsure — to study, work and plan — to become, maybe, canon, and after long time, larger things? . . . Which is mine? This — or that — or either? O Blessed Lady, I would choose from within!"

The tall, jewelled Queen of Heaven looked serenely down upon him. She had ceased to breathe. The sign seemed not to be coming. He had before him a long ride, and he must go, with or without the token. He kept his position yet another minute, then, with

a deep sigh, relinquished the quest. Rising, he stepped backward from the presence of the Virgin of Roche-de-Frêne, out of the line of the Saracen pillars. As he went, the climbing shaft of amber light caught his eye and forthwith Jacob's ladder came into his head, and he began to send slim angels up and down it. He had a potent fancy.

Leaving the church, he passed Boniface of Beaucaire and Hugues the Free Lance. His step made a ringing on the pavement beside their prone heads. He felt for them no contempt. They were making, more or less, an honourable amende. Everybody in their lives had done or would do penance, and after life came purgatory. He passed them as he might pass any other quite usual phenomenon, and so quitted the cathedral.

Outside was Roche-de-Frêne, grey, close-built, massed upon the long hill-top, sending spurs of houses down the hillsides between olive and cypress, almond and plane and pine — Roche-de-Frêne, so well-walled, Roche-de-Frêne beat upon, laved, drowned by the southern sun.

Crown of its wide-browed craggy hill rose another hill; crown of this, a grey dream in the fiery day, sprang the castle of its prince, of that Gaucelm the Fortunate whose father had brought the pillars. The cathedral had its lesser rise of earth and faced the castle, and beside the cathedral was the bishop's palace, and between the church and the castle, up and down and over the hillsides, spread the town.

The sky was as blue as the robe of the Virgin of Roche-de-Frêne. The southern horizon showed a gleam of the Mediterranean, and north and west had purple mountains. In the narrow streets between the high houses, and in every little opening and chance square the people of Roche-de-Frêne, men, women and children, talked, laughed, and gestured. It was a feast day, holiday, merry in the sun. Wine was being drunk, jongleurs were telling tales and playing the mountebank.

Garin sought his inn and his horse. He was in Roche-de-Frêne upon Raimbaut's business, but that over, he had leave to ride to Castel-Noir and spend three days with his brother. The merry-making in the town tempted, but the way was long and he must go. A chain of five girls crossed his path, brown, laughing, making dancing steps, their robes kilted high, red and yellow flowers in their hair. "What a beautiful young man!" said their eyes. "Stay — stay!" Garin wanted to stay — but he was not without judgement and he went. At the inn he had a spare dinner, the only kind for which he could pay. A bit of meat, a piece of bread, a bunch of grapes, a cup of wine — then his horse at the door.

Half a dozen men-at-arms from the castle passed this way. They stopped. "That's a good steed!"

Garin mounted. "None better," he said briefly.

The grizzled chief of the six laid an approving touch upon the silken flank. "Where did you get him?"

Garin took the reins. "At home."

"Good page, where is that?"

"I am not page, I am esquire," said Garin.

"Good esquire, where is that?"

"'That' is Castel-Noir."

"A little black tower in a big black wood? I know the place," said the grizzled one. "Your lord is Raimbaut of the Six Fingers."

"Just."

"Whose lord is the Count of Montmaure, whose lord is our Prince Gaucelm, whose lord is the King at Paris, whose lord is the Pope in Rome, whose lord is God on His Throne. — Do you wish to sell your horse?"

"I do not."

"I have taken a fancy to him," said the man-at-arms. "But there! the land is at peace. Go your ways — go your ways! Are you for the jousting in the castle lists?"

"No. I would see it, but I have not time."

"You would see a pretty sight," quoth the man-at-arms. "There is Prince Gaucelm's second princess, to wit Madame Alazais that is the most beautiful woman in the world, and sitting beside her the prince's daughter, our princess Audiart, that is not so beautiful."

"They say," spoke Garin, "that she is not beautiful at all."

"That same 'They say' is a shifty knave. — Better go, and I will go with you," said the man-at-

arms, "for truly I have not been lately to the lists."

But Garin adhered to it that he could not. He made Paladin to curvet, bound and caracole, then with a backward laugh and wave of his hand went his way — but caused his way to lead him past the castle of Roche-de-Frêne.

So riding by, he looked up wistfully to barbican and walls and towers. The place was vast, a great example of what a castle might be. Enough folk for a town housed within it. At one point tree tops, peering over the walls, spoke of an included garden. Above the donjon just stirred in the autumn air the great blue banner of Gaucelm the Fortunate. The mighty gates were open, the drawbridge down, the water in the moat smiled as if it had neither memory nor premonition of dead men in its arms. People were crossing, gay of dress. The sunny noon, the holiday time, softened all the hugeness, kept one from seeing what a frown Roche-de-Frêne might wear. Garin heard trumpets. The esquire of Raimbaut the Six-fingered, the brother of Foulque the Cripple, the youth from the small black tower in the black wood, gazed and listened with parted lips. Raimbaut held from Montmaure, but for Raimbaut's fief and other fiefs adjacent, Montmaure who held mainly from the House of Aquitaine, owed Roche-de-Frêne fealty. Being feudal lord of his lord, Gaucelm the Fortunate was lord of Foulque the Cripple and Garin the Squire. The latter won-

dered if ever he would enter there where the trumpets were blowing.

The great pile passed, the town itself passed, he found himself upon a downward sweeping road and so, by zig-zags, left the hill of Roche-de-Frêne and coming to the plain rode west by north between shorn fields and vineyards. The way was fair but lonely, for the country folk were gone to the town for this day of the patron saint and were not yet returning. Before him lay woods — for much of the country was wooded then — and craggy hills, and in the distance purple mountains. He had some leagues to ride. Now and again he might see, to this hand or to that, a castle upon a height, below it a huddled brown hamlet. Late in the afternoon there would lie to his right the Convent of Our Lady in Egypt. But his road was not one of the great travelled ways. It traversed a sparsely populated region, and it was going, presently, to be lonely enough.

Garin rode with sunken head, trying to settle matters before he should see Foulque. If Raimbaut had been a liberal, noble, joyous lord! But he was none such. It was little that page or esquire could learn in his gloomy castle, and little chance might have knight of his. A gloomy castle, and a lord of little worth, and a lady old and shrewish. . . . Every man must have a lord — or so was Garin's world arranged. But if only every man could choose one to his liking —

The road bent. Rounding a craggy corner, Pala-

din and he well-nigh trod upon a sleeping man, propped at the road edge against a grey boulder. Paladin curvetted aside, Garin swore by his favourite saint, the man awoke and stretched his arms. He was young, — five or six years older, perhaps, than Garin. His dress, when it came to hue and cut, showed extravagant and gay, but the stuffs of which it was composed were far from costly. Here showed a rent, rather neatly darned, and here a soil rubbed away as thoroughly as might be. He was dark and thin, with long, narrow eyes that gave him an Eastern look. Beside him, slung from his neck by a ribbon, lay a lute, and he smiled with professional brilliancy.

CHAPTER II

THE JONGLEUR AND THE HERD-GIRL

"JONGLEUR," said Garin, "some miles from this spot there is a feast day in a fair town. This is the strangest thing that ever I saw, that a jongleur should be here and not there!"

"Esquire," said the other, "I have certain information that the prince holds to-day a great tourney, and that every knight and baron in forty miles around has gone to the joust. I know not an odder thing than that all the knights should be riding in one direction and all the esquires in another!"

"Two odd things in one day is good measure," said Garin. "That is a fine lute you have."

The thin dark person drew the musical instrument in front of him and began to play, and then to sing in a fair-to-middling voice.

"In the spring all hidden close,
Lives many a bud will be a rose.
In the spring 't is crescent morn,
But then, ah then, the man is born!
In the spring 't is yea or nay;
Then cometh Love makes gold of clay!
Love is the rose and truest gold,
Love is the day and soldan bold,
Love —"

The jongleur yawned and ceased to sing. "Why," he asked the air, "why should I sing Guy of Perpi-

gnan's doggerel and give it immortality when Guy of Perpignan, turning on his heel, hath turned me off?"

He drew the ribbon over his head, laid the lute on the grass, and leaning back, closed his eyes. Garin gazed at the lute for a moment then, dismounting, picked it up and tried his hand. He sang a hunting stave, in a better voice by far than was the jongleur's. None had ever told him that he had a nightingale in his throat.

The jongleur opened his eyes. "Good squire, I could teach you to sing not so badly! But sing of love — sing of love! Hunting is, poetically speaking, out of court favour."

"I sing of that which I know of," said Garin.

The other sat up. "Have I found the phœnix? Nay, nay, I trow not! Love is the theme, and I have not found a man — no, not in cloister — who could not rhyme and carol and expound it! Love is extremely in fashion. — Have you a lord?"

"Aye."

"Has not that lord a lady?"

"Aye, so."

"Then love thy lady, and sing of it."

"I know," said Garin, "that love is the fashion."

"The height of it," answered the other. "It has been so now for fifty years and there seems no declining. It rages."

Garin left his horse to crop the sweet grass and came and sat upon the boulder above the jongleur. "Tell me," he said, "how it came to be so. I have a

brother, older than me, who scoffs and saith that women did not use to be of such account."

The jongleur took up his lute again. "The troubadour whom, until the other day, I served, discusses that. He is proud and ungrateful, but yet for your edification, I will repeat what he says: —

"As earthly man walks earthly ways,
At times he findeth, God the praise!
Far leagues apart, thousand no less,
Fresh life, fresh light, that will him bless.
It cometh not save he do beckon.
He groweth to it as I reckon.
And when it comes the past seems grey,
And only now the golden day.
Then in its turn the golden day
Fadeth before new gold alway.
And yet he holds the ancient gain,
And carryeth it with him o'er the plain.
And so we fare and so we grow,
Wise men would not have it other so."

"That is a good rede," said Garin.
"It continueth thus," answered the jongleur.

"In time of old came Reason, King, —
Ill fares the bow that lacks that string!
When time was full, to give great light,
Came Jesu's word and churches' might.
Then Knighthood rose and Courtesy,
And all we mean by Chivalry.
These had not come, I rede you well,
Save that before them rang a bell,
'Turn you, and look at Eve beside,
Who with you roameth the world wide,
And look no more as hart on hind.'
Now Love is seen by those were blind.

Full day it is of high Love's power.
Her sceptre stands; it is her hour.
And well I wis her lovely face
To Time his reign will lend a grace! —
But think ye not is made the ring!
Morn will come a further thing."

The jongleur ceased to finger his lute; Garin sat silent on the boulder. The light, sifting through the trees, chequered his olive-green, close-fitting dress and his brown mantle. He sat, clasping his knee, his eyes with the blue glints at once bright and dreamy.

"I have read," he said, "that it is a great thing to be a great lover."

"So all the troubadours say," quoth the jongleur.

He put the ribbon of the lute around his neck, stretched himself and rose. "Miles still to the town! The day is getting on, and I will bid you adieu."

Garin, too, looked at the sun, whistled to Paladin and left the boulder.

"My name is Elias," said the jongleur, "and I was born at Montaudon. If you make acquaintance with a rich baron who would like to hear a new tale or song each night for a thousand running, bear me in mind. I play harp, viol and lute, and so well and timedly that when they hear me, mourners leave their weeping and fall to dancing. Moreover, I know how to walk upon my hands and to vault and tumble, and I have a trick with eggs and another with platters in the air that no man or woman hath ever seen into. I have also a great store of riddles. In addi-

tion, if need be, I can back a horse and thrust with a spear."

"I know no such lord," said Garin sadly. "I would I were he myself."

"Then perhaps you may meet with some famous troubadour. I will serve none," said Elias, "who is not in some measure famous. I prefer that he be knight as well as poet. Be so kind as to round it in such an one's ear that you know a famed jongleur. Say to him that if God has not given him voice wherewith to sing or to relate his chansons, tensos, and sirventes, I, who sing like rossignol and who learned narration in Tripoli and Alexandria, will do him at least some justice. But if he sings like rossignol himself or, God-like, speaks his own compositions, then say that I am the best accompanist — harp, lute, or viol — between Spain and Italy. Say that, even though he be armed so cap-à-pie, there will arise occasions when he is not in voice, or is weary or out of spirits. Then how well to have such as I beside him! Then tell him that I have the completest memory, that I learn most quickly and neither forget nor misplace, and that never do I take a liberty with my master's verse. When you have come that far, make a pause; then, while he ponders, resume. Say that, doubtless, at that moment, a hundred jongleurs, scattered up and down the land, are chance learning and wrongly giving forth his mightiest, sweetest poems. Were it not well — ask him — himself to teach them to one with mem-

ory and delivery beyond reproach, who in turn might teach others? So, from mouth to mouth, all would go as it should, and he be published correctly. Let that sink in. Then tell him that I am helpful in lesser ways, — silent when silence is wanted, always discreet, a good bearer of letters and messages, quick at extrications, subtle as an Italian. Say that I am a good servant and honour him who feeds me and never mistake where the salt stands. Say that I am skilful beyond most, and earnest ever for the advancement and honour of my master. Lastly, say that I am agreeable, but not too agreeable, in the eyes of women."

"That is necessary?" asked Garin.

"Absolutely," answered the jongleur. "Your lover is as jealous as God. There must not be two Gods in one miracle play."

"Does every troubadour," asked Garin, "love greatly?"

"He thinks he does," said Elias. "Do not forget, if you meet a truly famed one, Elias of Montaudon. You may also say that I have been in the company of many poets, and that I know the secret soul of Guy of Perpignan."

Both left the boulder and stepped into the road. Garin laid his hand on Paladin's neck.

"My lord is Raimbaut the Six-fingered," he said. "His wife, my lady, is half-aged and evil to look upon, and she rails at every one save Raimbaut, whom she fears."

"That is ill-luck," said the jongleur. "There is, perhaps, some neighbouring lady —"

"No. Not one."

"To be very courtly," said the jongleur, "one must be in love with Love. You need not at all see a woman as she is. It suffices if she is young and not deformed, and of noble station."

"She must always be noble?"

"It doth not yet descend to shepherdesses," said the jongleur. "For them the antique way suffices."

Garin mounted his horse and sat still in saddle, his eyes upon a fair green branch that the sun was transfiguring, making it very lively and intense in hue.

"Great love," he said. "By the soul of my father, I think it is a great thing! But if there is none set in your eyes to love —"

"Can you not," said the jongleur, like Lord Rudel, love one unseen?"

Garin sat regarding the green branch. "I do not know.... We love the unseen when we love Honour." He sat for a moment in silence, then drew a sigh and spoke as though to himself. "It is with me as if all things were between coming and going, and a half-light, and a fulness that presses and yet knows not its path where it will go. I know not what I shall do, nor how I shall carry life. Now I feel afire and now I am sad —" He broke off and looked beyond the green branch; then, before the other could speak, shook Paladin's reins and moved

down the leafy way. He glanced over his shoulder at the jongleur. "I will remember you."

"Aye, remember!" returned the jongleur. He faced toward the town, put one leg before the other, and, going, swept his fingers across the strings of his lute. He, too, looked over his shoulder and called across the widening distance. "Choose Love!" he called.

Garin, turning the corner of the jutty hill, lost sight of him. The tinkle of the lute came a moment longer, then it, too, vanished. The wind in the leaves sighed and sighed. "O Our Lady," prayed Garin, "give thy guidance to the best man within me!"

It was now full afternoon, the road growing narrower and worse, until at last it was a mere track. It ran through a forest large and old, and it grew quite lonely. The squire passed no one at all, saw only the great wood and its inmates that were four-footed or feathered. He was sympathetic to such life, and ordinarily gave it attention and found in an inward and disinterested pleasure attention's reward. But to-day his mind was divided and troubled, and he rode unseeingly.

"The Abbot and Holy Church," said part of his mind. "Raimbaut and some day knighthood," said another part. "There is earthly power," said the first part, "for those who serve Holy Church — serve Her to Her profit and liking. Earthly power — and in Heaven, prelates still!" Spoke the second

part; "Ripe grapes of power fall, too, to the warrior's hand. Only be tall enough, strong enough to pluck them from the stoutest fortress wall! Knights have become barons, barons counts, counts kings! — And is not a good knight welcome in Heaven? I trow that he is, and that the angels vie with one another to do him honour!"

It seemed to Garin, though it seemed dimly enough, that other voices were trying to make themselves heard. But the first two were the loud ones, the distinct ones. They were the fully formed, the sinewy, the inherited concepts.

He rode on. He was now near the end of the forest. It began to break into grassy glades. In a little time it had so thinned that looking between the tree trunks one saw open country. Paladin raised his head, pricked his ears.

"What is it?" asked Garin. "Those yonder are only sheep upon the hillside."

The next moment he heard a woman scream, "Help! Help!"

He pricked Paladin forward and together they burst into a little open space, rounded by a thicket and shadowed by oaks. To one of these a horse was tied. Its dismounted rider, a young man, richly dressed, had by the arms and had forced to her knees, a peasant girl, herd, as it seemed, of a few sheep who might be seen upon the hillside beyond the thicket.

She cried again, "*A moi! A moi!*" She fought

like a young tigress, twisting her body this way and that, seeking to wrench her arms free, and then falling, bending her face and biting. The man was big-boned and strong, with red-gold locks, bristling to auburn, and face and eyes just now red and gleaming. He was young — a year or two older than Garin, — but his head showed a knight's spur. He bent the girl backward, struck her a blow that fairly stunned her senses.

Garin leaped into the ring. "Thou coward! Turn and fight!"

As he spoke he leaped to the ground and drew his dagger — a long and good one it chanced to be.

The attacker turned upon him a face of surprise and fury. "Mordieu! Mordieu! Begone from here!" Snatching from his belt a small, silver-mounted horn, he blew it shrilly, for he had followers with him whose he had sent ahead when he came upon the herd-girl and would wait for. If present, a score. But they had gone too considerable a way, as the wind blew against the horn, in a hill-mere between. Whatever it was, he summoned in vain.

"Ulbert coward!" cried Garin. "Turn and fight!"

The knight stamped upon the ground. "Fight with a page or a squire or boy! My men shall scourge that green coat from your back. Begone with your life —"

"Now," answered Garin, "if you were lord of France, yet are you to me dead and accursed!"

Whereupon the other took his hands from the

herd-girl, drew his short sword, and sprang upon him.

Raimbaut the Six-fingered had faults many and heavy, but those about him lacked not for instruction in the art of attack and defence. Garin was skilful to make the difference not so pronounced between that long dagger of his and the other's sword, and he was as strong as his opponent, and his eyes nothing like so clouded with despite and fury. The knight had far the wider experience, was counted bold and successful. But to-day he was at a disadvantage; he knew cold rages in which he fought or tilted well; but this was a hot rage, and his arm shook and he struck wide. Still the summoned men did not come, and still the two struggled for mastery. As for the herd-girl — she had risen to her knees and then to her feet, and now was standing beneath a young oak, her eyes upon the combat. At first she had made a move to leave the place, and then had shaken her head and stayed.

Garin gained, his antagonist fighting now in a blind fury. Presently the squire gave a stroke so effective that the blood spouted and the knight, reeling, let fall his weapon. He himself followed, sinking first upon his knee and then upon his face.

"Now have I slain you?" demanded Garin, and thrusting the sword aside with his foot, kneeled to see.

Whereupon the other turned swiftly and struck

upward with his dagger. The squire, jerking aside, went free of the intended hurt.

"Now! by the soul of my father!" swore Garin, "this is a noble knight and must be nobly dealt with!" And so he took the other's wrists, forced away the dagger, and wrestling with him, bound his hands with his belt, then dragged him to the nearest tree, and, cutting the bridle from his horse, ran the leather beneath his arms and tied him to the trunk. This done, he took from him the horn, and stooping, glanced at his wound. "It will not kill you. Live and learn knightliness!"

The other, bound to the tree, twisted and strove, trying to free himself. His face was no longer flushed but pale from loss of blood and huge anger. His eyes burned like coals and he gnashed his teeth. He had a hawk nose, a sensuous mouth, and across his cheek a long and curiously shaped scar, traced there by a poignard. Garin, gazing upon him, saw that he promised to be a mighty man.

The bound one spoke, his voice shaking with passion. "Who are you and what is your name? Who is your lord? My father and I will come, level your house with earth, flay you alive and nail you head downward to a tree —"

"If you can, fair sir," said Garin. Stepping back, he saw upon the earth the herd-girl's distaff where she had dropped it when the knight came against her. The squire picked it up, came back to the captive's side and thrust it between his tied hands.

"Now," he said, "let your men find you with no sword, but with a distaff!"

But the herd-girl moved at that from beneath the oak. Garin found her at his side, a slim, dark girl, with torn dress and long, black, loosened hair. "You are all alike!" she cried. "You would shame him with my distaff! But I tell you that it is my distaff that you shame!" With that she came to the bound man, caught the distaff from between his hands, and with it burst through the thicket and went again among her sheep.

There, presently, Garin found her, lying beneath a green bank, her head buried in her arms.

"You were right," said Garin, standing with Paladin beside her, "to take your distaff away. I am sorry that I did that. — Now what will you do? He had those with him who will come to seek him."

The girl stood up. "I have been a fool," she said, succinctly. "But there! we learn by folly." She looked about her. "Where will I go? Well, that is the question."

"Where do you live?"

The herd-girl seemed to regard the horizon from west to east and from east to west. Then she said, "In a hut, two miles yonder. But his men went that way."

"Then you cannot go there now."

"No. — Not now."

Garin pondered. "It is less than two leagues," he said, "to the Convent of Our Lady in Egypt. I could

take you there. The good nuns will give you shelter and send you safe to-morrow to your people."

The herd-girl seemed to consider it, then she nodded her head. She said something, but her voice was half lost in the black torrent of her loosened hair. The sun's rays were slant — it was growing late.

Garin mounted and drew her up behind him. At a little distance the road forked.

"They went that way," she said, pointing.

"Then it's as well," said Garin, "that we go this. Now we had best ride fast for a time."

They rode fast for a good long way; then, as no hoof-sound or cry came from behind, the squire checked Paladin, and they went slowly enough to talk.

"I have hopes," said Garin, "that he swooned, and when they found him could tell them naught. Do you know his name?"

"No. I was asleep in the sun."

"What is your name?"

"Jael."

"The nuns will care for you."

"I will ask them to let me stay and keep their sheep."

They rode on through a fair, smiling country. Garin fell silent and the herd-girl was not talkative. He could not but ride wondering about that knight back there, and who he might be and how powerful. He saw that it was possible that he had provided a hornet's nest for the ears of Castel-Noir and Foulque.

He drew a sigh, half-frighted and half-proud of a proved prowess.

The girl behind him moved slightly. "I had forgot to say it," she murmured. "I will say it now. Fair sir, I am humbly grateful —"

Garin had a great idiosyncrasy. He disliked to be thanked. "I liked that fighting," he said. "It was no sacrifice. That is," he thought, "it will not be if he never find out my name."

Paladin carried them a way farther. Said Garin, remembering chivalry, "It is man's part to protect the weaker being, that is woman."

"It puzzles so!" said the herd-girl. "I am not very weak. Is it man's part, too, to lay hands upon a woman against her will? If man did not that, then man need not do, at such cost, the other. What credit to put water on the house you yourself set afire?"

"Now by Our Lady," said Garin, "you are a strange herd-girl!" He twisted in the saddle so that he might look at her. She sat still, — young, slim and forlorn to the eye, dark as a berry, her feet bare and her dress so torn that her limbs showed. Her long, black loosened hair almost hid her face, which seemed thin, with irregular features. She had her distaff still, the forlorn serf's daughter, herself a serf.

"If we plume ourselves it is a mistake, and foolishness," said Garin. "But yet though one man act villainously, another may act well."

"Just," said the herd-girl. "And I thank the one

who has acted well — but not all men. I thank a man, but not mankind."

"How old are you?"

"I am eighteen."

"Where got you your thoughts?"

"There is time and need for thinking," said the herd-girl, "when you keep sheep."

With that she sighed and fell silent. They were going now by a swift stream; when, presently, they came to the ford and crossed, they were upon convent lands. Our Lady in Egypt was a Cistercian convent, ample and rich, and her grey-clad nuns came from noble houses. There were humbly born lay sisters. The abbess was the sister of a prince. The place had wealth, and being of the order of Saint Bernard, then in its first strength, was like a hive for work. From the ford on, the road was mended, the fields fat, the hedges trim. The convent had its serfs, and the huts of these people were not miserable, nor did the people themselves look hunger-stricken and woe-begone. The hillsides smiled with vineyards, the sky arched all with an Egyptian blue, the westering sun, tempering his fierceness, looked benignly on. Presently, in a vale beside the stream, they saw the great place, set four-square, a tiny hamlet clinging like an infant to its skirts. Behind, covering a pleasant slope, were olive groves with tall cypresses mounting like spires. Grey sisters worked among the grey trees. A bell rang slowly, with a silver tone.

"I will take you to the gate," said Garin. "Then you can knock and the sister will let you in."

"Aye, that will she. And you, fair squire, where will you go? Where is your home?"

Now Garin was thinking, "If that knight is a powerful man it is well that I gave him no inkling of where to find me!" Assuredly he had no thought nor fear that the herd-girl might betray. And yet he did not say, "I was born at Castel-Noir," or "I live now in the castle of Raimbaut the Six-fingered." He said, "I dwell by the sea, a long way from here."

"Dusk is at hand," said the herd-girl. "There, among those houses, is one set apart for benighted travellers."

"How do you know that? Have you been here before?"

"Aye, once. — If you have far to ride, or the way is not clear before you, you had best rest to-night in the traveller's house."

But Garin shook his head. "I will go on."

With that they came, just before the sun went down, to the wall of the convent, and the door beneath a round arch where the needy applied for shelter or relief. The squire checked Paladin. He made a motion to dismount, but the girl put a brown hand upon his knee.

"Stay," she said, "where you are! I will ring the bell and speak to the portress." So saying, she slipped to the earth like brown running water; then turned and spoke to the rescuer. "Fair squire," she

said, "take again my thanks. If ever I can pay good turn with good turn, be sure that I will do it!" She moved within the arch, put her hand to the bell and set it jangling, then again turned her head. "Will you remove from so close before the door? You will frighten the sister. And the sun is down and you had best be going. Farewell!"

Involuntarily Garin backed Paladin further from the round arch. The horse was eager for his stable, wheeled in that direction, and chafed at the yet restraining hand. Garin looked as in a dream at the herd-girl. Even now he could not see her face for that streaming hair. A grating in the convent door opened and the sister who was portress looked forth. The herd-girl spoke, but he could not hear what was the word she said. A key grated, the convent door swung open. "Lord God!" cried the grey sister. He heard that, and had a glimpse of her standing with lifted hands. The herd-girl crossed the threshold. Paladin, insisting upon the road, took for a moment the squire's full attention. When he looked back the convent wall was blank; door and grating alike were closed.

CHAPTER III

THE NIGHTINGALE

FOULQUE the Cripple listened with a perturbed brow. "You should have left him alone! A wretched herd-girl!"

"If I am to be knight," said Garin hotly, "I will not read knighthood so."

"Psha!" said Foulque. "They put resistance on! It is a mask when they seem unwilling. And if it were real, what then? — Saint Pol, what then? — And you saw naught to tell you who he was?"

"No."

Foulque fretted. "If I had been there, I should have found some colour or sign! But you go as dreamily as if you were bewitched! You see naught that's to the point."

"He had a blue robe and a surcoat of crimson, and shoes of brown cordovan," said Garin. "His sword had a rich hilt, and his gloves were embroidered. I noted them where he had thrust them in the bosom of his robe when I knelt to look at his wound. He was red-gold of hair and hawk nosed, full-lipped, and with a scar on his cheek. I think that he is older than I, but not much older."

"Well, well!" said Foulque, "he may have been some wanderer from a distance, with no recourse but

his own hand. Moreover, for fame's sake, he will not be quick to talk about a younger man, and one of less degree. If he found out neither your name nor house, — perhaps we'll hear no more of it. . . . Well, what have you to say? I have news for you! The abbot hath been to Roche-de-Frêne, and on his way home is pleased to sleep one night at Castel-Noir. A man of his brought notice this morning. This is Tuesday — Friday he will be here." Foulque rose and limped across the hall in some excitement. "Poor and bare, God knows! is Castel-Noir, but we will do what we can! My bed here he shall have, and we will put up the hangings from Genoa, and strew the floor with fair herbs. There's wine enough, and Pierre shall begin his baking to-morrow morn! Friday. — He will have, his man said, twenty in his train. The sub-prior — five or six brothers — the rest stout serfs with staves. — Friday! — Every man of ours must be set to fishing!"

When every man was sent to the stream, the company of fishermen covered no great length of bank. Moreover all could not settle to fishing, for some must forth to forage for the approaching horse, and to find venison, fowls, and other matters for the Saturday morn. For poor was the small black tower in the black wood! Foulque could furnish to his lord a young brother for esquire, and, if a levy were made, ten men, by no means prize men, with ten horses, by no means horses for a king's stable. Paladin was the only horse of that nature. A poor, small fief was

Castel-Noir — black keep and tower on a crag, set in a dark wood, with a few fields beyond, and all under shadow of the mountains to the north. South of it, only, ran the bright stream where fish were to be caught.

Thursday sunrise, Garin took a fishing-rod and went down the crag by the road cut, long since, in the rock, and through the wood to this stream. In a great leather pouch slung over his shoulder he had, with other matters, bread and meat. He meant to make a day of it, bringing home in the evening good fish for Pierre's larder. When he reached the stream, he found there old Jean and his two grandsons and they had a great basket, its bottom already flashing silver and iris.

"Good-morning, Jean and Pol and Arnaut," said Garin.

"Good-morning, master! The Blessed Maries have sent good fishing! They snap as soon as you touch the water."

Farther down the stream he found Sicart. "How great a man, master, is the abbot? Very great he must be if he eats all the fish we are taking! It is a miracle!"

Garin moved down the stream seeking for a place that should seize his fancy. The eagerness with which he had risen and sallied forth disappeared. They would have enough for the Abbot and his train — more than enough. At times he cared for fishing, but not, he found, to-day. Why then fish, if there

was no need? He still carried the rod, but he continued to walk, making no motion to stop and put it into use. There was a foot-path by the stream, and it and the gliding water led him on. He wanted to think, or, more truly, to dream. Back in the black castle all was topsy-turvy, and Foulque concerned only with family fortunes.

Now Garin walked, and now he leaned against some tree and gazed at the flowing water; but on the whole he moved forward with such steadiness that before the sun was much above the tree-tops the foot-path ceased, having brought him to a great round stone and an overhanging pine, and the end, on this side, of the fief of Castel-Noir. Beyond came a strip of stony and unprofitable land, a debated possession, claimed by two barons and of no especial use to any man. Garin threw himself down upon the boundary stone and, chin in hand, regarded the sliding stream.

It was this stone, perhaps, that brought into mind Tuesday's boulder and the jongleur. Rather than the jongleur came the figure of the jongleur's lute. Garin's fingers moved as though they felt beneath them the strings. A verse was running, running through his head. Only after a slow, lilting, inward saying of it over twice or thrice did it come to him, like the opening of a flower, that it was his own, not another's. He had made it, lying there. He rose from the stone and walked forward, still going with the gliding stream. As he walked, the second verse

came to him. He said over the two, said over his first poem and said it over again, tasting it, savouring it, hearing it now with music. He was in a dream of dawn. . . .

There was no longer a path, but he went on over the stony soil, beneath old gnarled and stunted trees. The sun rode high and made the water a flood of diamonds. Garin walked with a light and rapid step. When a tree came in his way he swerved and rounded it and went on, but he was hardly conscious that it had been there. The fishing-rod was yet in his hand, but he did not think of the rod, nor of fishing, nor of Castel-Noir, nor Foulque, nor the abbot, nor of the decision which the abbot's visit would force. He hardly knew of what he was thinking. It was diffused, — the world was diffused, — drifting and swinging, and in the mist he touched a new power.

A hawk shot downwards, plunged beak in water, rose with the taken fish and soared into the eye of day. Garin started, shook himself, and looked about him. He had come farther than he meant. He half-turned, then stood irresolute, then again faced downstream. The day was not old, and a distaste seized him for going back and listening to Foulque on what the abbot might or might not do. He wandered on.

An hour later he came upon another boundary mark. This was a cross cut in stone, with a rude carving upon the block that formed the base. Garin

sat down to rest, and sitting so, fell to scraping with his knife the encrusting lichen from this carving. There was a palm tree and a pyramid, which stamped Egypt in mind. Here was Saint Joseph, and here was the ass bearing the Mother and Child. Above was Latin, to the effect that you were upon the lands of the Convent of Our Lady in Egypt. Garin knew that, and that two miles down the stream the nuns would be now at the noon office. He wondered if, yesterday or to-day, they had sent Jael the herd back to her own. But, on the surface, at least, of consciousness there floated no long thought of that matter. His mood was one of half-melancholy, half-exaltation, all threaded with the warm wonder of making verses.

The nature of the land changed here. For stone and dwarfed growth there began a richer soil and nobler trees. The latter made, all along the water's edge, a narrow grove, with here and there a fairy opening and lawn of fine grass. Garin, having scraped away the lichen, looked at the sun, which was now past the meridian, and thought that he would retrace his steps.

Before him, out of a covert a little way down the stream, a nightingale sang suddenly. Garin listened, and it might be his mood of to-day that made him think that never before had he heard any bird sing so sweetly. It carolled on, rich and deep, and the young man went toward it. The ribbon of wood was dark and sweet; the bird sang like a soul imprisoned.

When it silenced itself Garin still stood looking up into its tree. Presently it flew from that bower and, crossing one of the elfin lawns, lost itself in the farther trees. Garin went on to this grove and it sang for him again. When it ceased he did not go back to the boundary stone. This country pleased him and he thought, "I will go on and see how Our Lady in Egypt looks from this side."

He followed the stream a mile and more. It was slipping now beneath mighty trees. Their arching boughs made a roof; it was like walking in cloisters. Between the pillars, inland, could be seen fields and vineyards and, at last, the convent's self, with her olive trees behind her. Garin came now to thickly planted laurels, a grove within a grove. This he threaded, pushing aside the heavy leaves. The laurels ended suddenly, standing close and trim, a high green wall. This followed a curving line and half enclosed a goodly space of turf, a shaven floor of emerald, laved by the little river and shaded by a plane, a poplar, and a cedar. The cedar stood close to the laurels and close to Garin, and beneath the cedar was placed a seat of stone carved like a great chair. The spot was all chequered with light and shade, the air was sweet and fine, and the water sang as it passed. A fairer place for dreaming, for talk or sober merry-making, might not be found. Just now it was as clean as fairyland of human occupancy.

Garin stepped from the laurel wall and sat in the stone seat. It pleased him, this place! A sense of

mystery gathered; he began to dream, dream. All manner of coloured, gleaming thought-motes danced over the threshold. The minutes passed.

Voices — women's voices! Doubly a trespasser that he was, he was not willing to be found here, reigning it from this seat over the sweep of lawn, the three trees, and the singing water. He rose, and stepped back into the wall of laurel; then, being young and not incurious, waited to see who it was that was coming. Lay sisters, perhaps, going from vineyard to vineyard, or bringing clothes for the washing to the river bank which here was rightly shelving. A gleam of grey garments between the tree-trunks on the other side of the sylvan theatre seemed to prove him right; and indeed, in a moment, there did emerge three or four of these same lay sisters — strong, tanned, peasant women, roughly dressed, fit for outdoor labour. They carried on their heads huge osier baskets, but when they set these down, what was taken out was not linen or woollen for washing, but rugs of Eastern weave and cushions of Eastern make.

Moreover, with or following the lay sisters came others — young women — who were certainly not under convent rule. These seized the rugs and cushions and scattered them here and there, to advantage, over the grass. They also set out dishes of fruit and Eastern comfits, and one placed a harp upon a square of gold silk which she spread beneath the poplar. As they worked they chattered like

magpies. They were dressed well and fancifully but not richly; it was to be made out that they were waiting-women of those who did dress richly. One cocked her ear, then raised her hand in a gesture to the others, whereupon all fell into a demure silence. The lay sisters who had been stolid and still throughout, now drew off by a path which carried them to the vineyards. The waiting women cast a look around, then, with nods of satisfaction, picked up the empty baskets and found for them and for themselves some pleasant subordinate haven down by the stream, around the corner of the lawn.

The little lawn lay prepared, festive and a desert. Now was the moment when Garin might withdraw and the rustle of the laurel leaves tell no tale where were no ears to hear. Truly, he thought once and twice of departing, but then before the third thought which might have passed into action, he caught, floating out of the opposite wood, delightful voices, laughter that rippled, and a sheen and flash of colours. What he forthwith determined to do was to please a little longer eye and ear and sate curiosity. Then — and it need not be long — he would turn, and as noiselessly as an innocent green-and-brown serpent, slip away toward Castel-Noir. Given that he were discovered, plain truth-telling were not bad. Discovery might bring him rebuke not too scornful, with, perhaps, some laughter in her eye.

He laid his fishing-rod down, then knelt beside it

upon the brown earth between the laurel stems. Couched so, he could look past the stone seat and the cedar trunk, and so observe what pageant might appear. Had he had a wand in his hand he could have touched with it this carven chair.

Out from the shadowy opposite grove came bright ladies, seven or eight. One was dressed in violet and one in rose, one in green and white, and one in daffodil, one in a bright medley, one in white sprigged with gold, and one in the colour of the sky. After the fashion of the time their hair hung in long braids from beneath fillet, or garland, or veil of gauze twisted turban-wise or floating loose. Their shoes were of soft-coloured leather or of silk, their dress close-fitting and sweeping the grass. The wide and long mantles that were worn by both sexes were not in evidence here — the day was warm and the convent, whence alone these fair ones could have come, at no distance. Garin wondered, and then he bethought himself that some great reigning countess — perhaps some duchess or princess of Italy or Spain or further yet afield, perhaps some queen — might be travelling through the land, going from one court to another and by the way pausing to refresh herself in the house of Our Lady in Egypt. From Roche-de-Frêne, he knew, there was no such absence. The man-at-arms at the inn had said that the princesses Alazais and Audiart were seated with their ladies to mark the jousts. . . . He lay and watched.

Of the bright apparitions two seemed of their

full summer and prime, more stately, more authoritative than the others. The others were in their spring and early spring. Light or dark, blonde or brunette, all had beauty. Garin's eyes darkened and softened, and the corners of his lips moved upward to see such an array, and the swimming movement with which they dispersed themselves over the lawn, and to hear their trained voices. All seemed gay and laughing, and yet there presently appeared a discontent. The dame in daffodil took up the harp and swept the strings.

"Ah!" cried the one in azure, "for a true troubadour!"

"For even a jongleur!"

"Ah, what is life without men!"

"Ah, for the tourney!"

"Ah, if there were in sight but a monastery!"

The older two, who had an air of responsibility, rebuked the others. "Life is made up of to and fro, and sounds and silences! Be content! It is but one month out of many."

"As if months were as plentiful as cherries!"

"Ah, if I were a princess —"

"Hush!" warned the daffodil-clad, and began to play upon the harp.

Garin saw that another two were coming through the grove. One of these would be the noble lady for whom it was all planned. His imagination was active to-day with a deep, involuntary pulsing. Foix or Toulouse, or the greater domains to the north and

west, or it might be Aragon, or it might be Italy? Or she might have come from Sicily, or like Prince Rudel's far lady, from a kingdom or duchy carved from Paynim lands. Some Eastern touch in the scene made him dwell upon that. No matter whence now she came, she must have lived on a day in the long, the outspread, the curving and sunny lands of this very south. The tongue of her ladies proved that. Wedded she might have been to some great prince and borne away, and now returned for a time and a pilgrimage to the land of birth. . . . All this and more was of his imaging. He lay upon the dark earth and parted the laurel leaves that he might see more clearly.

The two were now plain among the trees. One was a blonde of much beauty, dressed in grey cendal and carrying a book which seemed to belong to her companion. The latter was a little in advance, and she came on without speaking, and so stepped from the wood upon the lawn. The seven already arrived beneath the plane, the poplar, and the cedar made a formal movement of courtesy, then gathered like a rainbow about the one of first importance. Plaintiveness and discontent retired from evidence, court habit came up paramount. You might have thought that these were dryads or Dian's nymphs, and no other spot than this wood their loved home! There came to Garin's ear a ripple of sweet voices, but it seemed that their lady for whom had been spread the feast was either silent or seldom- and low-speak-

ing. She stood beneath the shimmering, tremulous poplar, a slender shape of fair height. She was dressed in some fine weave of dark blue with a girdle of samite studded with gems. The ends of this girdle hung to her silken shoe. Her hair, black and long, was braided with gems. She seemed young, young as the youngest there. "Seemed" is used, because Garin saw not her face. She wore, as did several of the others, a veil of Eastern device, but hers was long and wide and threaded with gold and silver, and so worn that it overhung and shielded every feature.

Attention was called to the placing of the rugs, the cushions, the harp, the dishes of fruit and comfits. The one for whom they had waited nodded her head and seemed to approve. She was not garrulous; there seemed to breathe about her, he knew not what, a tone of difference. All now moved to the water-edge, and for a time loitered there upon the green and rushy bank. One raised her voice and sang, —

> "Green are the boughs when lovers meet,
> Grey when they part—"

The bevy turned and came up the sloping lawn to the three trees and the cushions upon the grass. The shape in dark blue with the Eastern veil moved beyond them to the cedar and the stone chair. Here she took her seat, and when the others would have gathered about her waved them back with a slender, long-fingered hand. One brought to her a basket of grapes. She chose a purple cluster resting upon a

web of vine leaves but laid it untouched beside her upon the wide seat. There was a space between her and the dark enshadowing cedar and those others resting now upon the cushions. She sat quite still, a hand upon each arm of the chair, the deep blue of her dress flowing about her, the gems of the girdle ends making a sombre gleaming. The veil hid all her face from Garin, lying so near. He felt in her something solitary, something powerful, yet felt that she was young, young — She sat with her gaze straight before her upon the blue crests that showed afar. She sat as still as though an enchanter had bid her stay. And between her and the young man crouching in the laurels streamed no wide ocean of the autumn air, of the subtle ether. The moments passed, slow, plangent, like the notes of the harp that was being played. . . .

What happened to one or both? Did one only feel it, the one that knew there were two — or did, in some degree, the other also, and think it was a day-dream? All that Garin knew, kneeling there, was that something touched him, entered him. It came across that space, or it came from some background and space not perceived. It was measureless, or it seemed to him without measure. It was clothed in marvel; it was fulness and redoubling, it was more life. It was as loud as thunder, and as still as the stillest inner whisper. It was so sweet that he wished to weep, and yet he wished too to leap and spring and exult aloud, to send his cry of posses-

sion to the skies. He felt akin to all that his senses touched. But as for the form in the stone chair — he sat with her there, she knelt with him here, they were one body. . . . With a swimming feeling, her being seemed to pass from his. He knelt here, Garin of the Black Castle, squire of Raimbaut the Six-fingered, and she sat there whose face he had not seen — a great dame, lady doubtless of some lord of a hundred barons each worthier than Raimbaut.

Garin gazed across the little space between, and now it was as though it were half the firmament. She sat like a figure among the stars, blue-robed, amid the deep blue, and the cloudy world was between them. She grew like to a goddess — like to the Unattainable Ideal, and he felt no longer like a king, but like the acolyte that lights the lamp and kneels as he places it. Now it was the Age for this to happen, and for one man to act as had acted that knight in the wood toward Roche-de-Frêne, and for another to do as now did Garin.

For now he wished no longer to play the spy, and he turned very carefully and silently in the laurels and crept away. In all his movements he was lithe and clean, and he made no sound that the brooding young figure in the stone chair attended to. Presently, looking back, his eyes saw only the great height of the cedar, its dark head against the blue heaven. The liquid, dropping notes of the harp pursued him a little farther, but when he was forth from the laurel grove they, too, passed upon the air. He

was soon at the boundary cross of Our Lady in Egypt, and then upon the waste and stony land that set toward the fief of Castel-Noir. Was it only this morning, thought Garin, that he had come this way? And the nightingale that sang so deep and full — it was not in the boughs above — it was singing now in his own heart!

CHAPTER IV

THE ABBOT

FRIDAY the mistral blew, and Foulque was always wretched in that wind. He gloomed now from this narrow window and now from that in the black castle's thick walls. The abbot was not expected before the dial showed twelve, but Foulque looked from here and looked from there, and kept a man atop of the tower to scan the road beyond the wood. The hall was ready for the abbot, the arras hung, the floor strewn with leaves and autumn buds, the great chair placed aright, a rich coverlet spread upon the state bed. Pierre was ready, — the sauce for the fish, the fish themselves were ready for the oven. Castel-Noir rested clean and festive, and every man knew that he was to sink down upon both knees and ask the abbot's blessing.

The wind blew and hurled the leaves on high. The sun shone, the sky was bright, but the moving air, dry and keen, was as a grindstone upon which tempers were edged. A shrivelled, lame man must feel it. Under the hooded mantel a fire was laid, but not kindled. Foulque could not decide whether the abbot would feel the wind as he felt it, and want to be welcomed with physical as well as other warmth, or whether, riding hard, he would be heated and

would frown at the sight of the fire. Foulque would have liked a roaring blaze, out-sounding the wind. But the Abbot of Saint Pamphilius was of a full body, tall and stout, a hunter and a hawker. Foulque determined to have a torch from the kitchen immediately at hand and kindle or not kindle according to the first glimpse of his kinsman's face.

The window embrasures were deep enough to swallow a family. Foulque, a sensitive, knew without turning his head when Garin, too, stood within the one that overlooked the road where it emerged from the wood. "He should be here at any minute," said Foulque. "Well? Well?"

"Brother Foulque," said Garin, "I have determined, an it please you, to bide with Lord Raimbaut and become a knight."

Foulque let his wrath gather to a head. When it was at the withering point, his gaze having been directed upon Garin for full thirty seconds, he spoke. "Marry and crave pardon! Who is it hath determined?"

"I," said Garin. "I."

Foulque moistened his lips. "What has come to you? Raimbaut will let you go. The Abbot of Saint Pamphilius invites — nay, he will himself smooth your way to Holy Church's high places. I, your elder brother, command —"

"Your entreaty would do more, brother," said Garin. "But I can no other."

"'Can no other! — can no other!' Does the fool

see himself Alexander or Roland or Arthur?" Foulque laughed. "Raimbaut the Six-fingered's squire!"

Garin was patient. "All the same he can give me knighthood."

His brother laughed again and struck his hands together. "Knighthood! Knighthood! Oh, your advantage from his buffet on your shoulder! Raimbaut!" He held by the wall and stamped with the foot that was not lamed. "Fight — fight — fight! then eat an ox and drink a cask and go sleep! Ride abroad whenever you hear of a tourney that's not too difficult to enter. Tilt — tilt — tilt! and if you are not killed or dragged to the barrier, win maybe prizes enough to keep body and soul together until you hear of another joust! Between times, eat, drink, and sleep and have not a thought in your head! Sprawl in the sun by the keep, or yawn in the hall, or perhaps hunt a boar until there's more fighting! When there is, be dragged from the wall or smothered in the moat or killed in the breach when the castle's taken! Oh aye! Your lord may take his foe's castle and you be drunk for a day with victory and smothering and hanging and slaying on your part! Yet forecast the day when you'll drink the cup you're giving others! Look at the dice in your hand and know that if you throw six, yet will you throw ace!"

"I may not be always bound to Raimbaut."

"He is not old, and hath the strength of a bull!

And what of the young Raimbaut? Son grows like sire —"

"Even so," said Garin desperately, "things happen."

Foulque's anger and scorn flowed on. "Oh, I grant you! Have I forgotten large wars that may arise — fighting behind your lord for Prince or King or Emperor? I have not. Cities and great castles instead of small — thousands to kill and be killed instead of hundreds — the same thing but more of it! Still a poor knight — still in the train of Raimbaut the Six-fingered! The young Raimbaut hath six fingers also, hath he not? — Oh, you may go crusading, too, and see strange lands and kill the infidel who dares have his country spread around the Holy Sepulchre! Go! — and die of thirst or be slain with a scimitar, or have your eyes taken out and no new ones put in! Or, if you can, slay and slay and slay the infidel! What have you got? Tired arm and bloody hands and leave to go eat, drink, and sleep! A crusade! Your crusade enriches one, beggars fifty! Returns one, keeps the bones of a hundred —"

"I do not think of taking the cross," said Garin.

His brother laughed again with a bitter mirth. "Well, what's left? Let's see! If you can get Raimbaut's consent, you might become an errant knight and go vagabonding through the land! 'Fair sir, may I fight thee — all for the glory of valour and for thy horse and trappings?' — 'Fair dame, having no business of mine own, may I take thine upon me?

Tell me thy grievance, and I will not enquire if it be founded or no. Nor when, pursuing chivalry, I have redressed it, will I refuse rich gifts.' — Bah!" cried Foulque. "I had rather eat, drink, fight, and sleep with Raimbaut!"

"Aye," said Garin; then painfully, "You are picturing the common run of things. There have been and there are and there will be true and famous knights — aye, and learned, who make good poesy and honour fair ladies, and are courteous and noble and welcome in every castle hall! I mean not to be of the baser sort. And those knights I speak of had, some of them, as meagre a setting forth as mine —"

"In *romans!*" answered Foulque. "You are a fool, Garin! Take the other road — take the other road!"

"I've made my choice."

"Raimbaut the Six-fingered against the Abbot of Saint Pamphilius, who is close friend to Bishop Ugo, who is ear and hand to the Pope —"

"I choose."

"Now," cried Foulque, choking, "by the soul of our father, little lacks but I call Sicart and Jean and have you down into the dungeon! You are too untamed — you are too untamed!"

"In your dungeon," said Garin, "I would think, 'How like is this to abbey cell and cloister!'"

A silence fell. Only mistral whistled and eddied around the black tower. Then said Foulque tensely: "What has come to you? Two nights ago I saw you

ready to put your hands in those of Holy Church —" He broke off, facing the man from the tower top, framed now in the great door.

"Horsemen, my masters!" cried the watchman; "horsemen at the two pines!"

Foulque flung up his arms. "He is coming! Mayhap he will work upon you — seeing that a brother cannot! Let me by —"

Garin stood at the window watching the abbot and the twenty with him — ecclesiastical great noble and his cowled following — stout lay brothers and abbey serfs well clad and fed — the abbot's palfrey, sleek mules and horses — all mounting with a jingle of bits and creaking of leather, but with a suave lack of boisterous laughter, whoop, and shout, the grey zig-zag cut in the crag upon which was perched Castel-Noir. When they were immediately below the loophole window, he turned and, leaving the hall, went to the castle gate and stood beside Foulque.

When Abbot Arnaut and his palfrey reached them he sprang, squire-like, to the stirrup, gave his shoulder to the abbot's gloved hand. When the great man was dismounted, he knelt with his brother for the lifted fingers and blessing. The abbot was marshalled across the court to the hall, followed by those two from Saint Pamphilius whom his nod indicated. Jean and Sicart disposed of the following. Foulque's anxious drill bore fruits; everything went as if oiled.

Mistral still blew, high, cold and keen. "Have

you a fire, kinsman?" cried Abbot Arnaut. "I am as cold as a merman in the sea!"

Foulque made haste. The torch was at hand — in a moment there sprang a blaze — the hangings from Genoa were all firelit and the great beams of the roof.

"Hungry!" cried the abbot. "I am as hungry as Tantalus in hell! I remember when once I came here, a boy, good fishing —"

The fish were good, Pierre's sauce was good. All received commendation. The abbot was portly and tall, with a massy head, with a countenance so genial, a voice so bland, an eye so approving, that all appeared nature and no art. His lips seemed made for golden syllables, he had an unctuous and a mellow tongue. It was much to hear him speak Latin and much to hear him discourse in the vernacular. The *langue d'oc* came richly from his mouth. He was a mighty abbot, a gracious power, timber from which were made papal legates.

Foulque sat with him at the raised end of the table, the monks of his company being ranged a foot lower. But Garin, as was squire-like, waited upon the great guest and his brother. The abbot, the keen edge of hunger abated, showed himself gracious and golden, friendly, almost familiar. He spoke of the past, and of the father of his hosts. He asked questions that showed that he knew Castel-Noir, dark wood and craggy hills, mountains to the north, stream to the south. It even seemed that he remem-

bered old foresters and bowmen. He knew the neighbouring fiefs, the disputed ground, the Convent of Our Lady in Egypt. He was warm and pleasant with his kinsmen; he said that he had loved their father and that their mother had been a fair, wise lady. He remarked that poverty was a sore that might be salved; and when he had drunk a great cup of spiced wine, — having, for his health's sake, a perpetual dispensation in that wise, — he said that he was of mind that a man should serve and be served by his own blood. "Kin may prove faithless, but unkin beats them to the post!"

Dinner was eaten, wine drunken, hands washed. The abbot and Foulque rose, the monks of Saint Pamphilius rose, the table was cleared, the boards and trestles taken from the hall.

Abbot Arnaut, standing by the fire, looked at the great bed. "By the rood!" he said, "to face mistral clean from Roche-de-Frêne to this rock is a wearisome thing! I will repose myself, kinsman, for one hour."

All withdrew save the lay brother whom he retained for chamberlain. Foulque offered Garin's service, who stood with ready hands. But the abbot was used to Brother Anselm, said as much, and with a sleepy and mellow voice dismissed the two brothers. "Return in an hour when I shall be refreshed. Then will we talk of that of which I wrote."

The two left the hall. Without, Foulque must discover from Jean and Sicart if all went well and the

abbot's train was in good humour. "I've known a discontented horse-boy make a prince as discontented!" But they who followed the abbot were laughing in the small, bare court, and the bare ward room. Even mistral did not seem to trouble them.

South of the tower, in the angle between it and the wall, lay the tiniest of grass-plots, upbearing one tall cypress. Foulque, his mantle close around him, beckoned hither Garin. Here was a stone seat in the sun, and the black tower between one and that wind from the mountains. Foulque sat and argued, Garin stood with his back against the cypress. The hour dropped away, and Foulque saw nothing gained. He shook with wrath and concern for slipping fortunes. "Since yesterday! This has happened since yesterday! You took your rod and went down to the river to fish. What siren sang to you from what pool?"

Garin lifted his head. "No siren. Something wakened within me, and now I will be neither monk nor priest. I am sorry to grieve you, Foulque."

But Foulque nursed his wrath. "The hour has passed," he said. "So we go back to the abbot and spurn a rich offer!" He rose and with a bleak face left the grass-plot.

Garin followed, but not immediately. He stood, beneath the cypress tree and tried to see his life. He could not do so; he could only tell that his heart was parted between sorrow and joy, and

that a nightingale sang and sang. He could tell that he wished to live beautifully, to do noble deeds, to win honour, to serve, if need be to die for, a goddess whose face was veiled. His life whirled; at once he felt generous, wealthy, and great, and poor, humble, and despairing. He seemed to see through drifting mists a Great Meaning; then the cloud thickened and he was only Garin, Raimbaut's squire — then again images and music, then aching sadness. He stood with parted lips, beneath the cypress, and he looked south. At last he sighed and covered his eyes with his hand, then turned and went back to the hall.

The abbot was awake, had left the great bed and come to the great chair. Seated at ease in the light of the renewed fire, he was goldenly discoursing to Foulque who sat on a stool, of Roche-de-Frêne and its prince and his court, and of Bishop Ugo. "Ah, the great chances in the fair lap of Mother Church! Ugo is ambitious. There it is that we differ. I am not ambitious — no, no! I am an easy soul, and but take things as they come my way!" He turned in his chair and looked at Garin standing behind his brother. "Ha!" he said, "and this is the squire who would become canon?"

Foulque groaned. "Most Reverend Father, the boy is mad! I think that he is bewitched. I pray that of your goodness, wisdom and eloquence you bring him to a right mind —"

The Abbot of Saint Pamphilius smiled, assured

as the sun. "What is it? Does he think that already he has Fortune for mistress?"

"He will choose knighthood," said Foulque. "He has no doubt of winning it."

The abbot lifted his brows. He looked with dignity into the fire, then back at Foulque and at Garin the squire. "It pains me," he said, "the folly of mankind! Are you born prince, count or baron, then in reason, you must run the course where you are set. Though indeed, time out of mind, have been found castellans, vavasours, barons, dukes, and princes who have laid aside hauberk, shield, and banner, and blithely come with all their wealth into the peaceful hive of Holy Church — so rightly could they weigh great value against low! But such as you, young man — but such as you — poor liegemen of poor lords! What would you have? Verily, the folly is deep! By no means all who would have knighthood gain it, and if it is gained, what then? Another poor knight in a world where they are as thick and undistinguishable as locusts! — Ha, what do you say?"

Garin's lips had moved, but now he flushed red.

"Speak out!" commanded the abbot, blandly imperious. "What was it that you said?"

Garin lowered his eyes. "I said that there were many churchmen in the world, as thick and undistinguishable —"

Foulque drew a dismayed breath. But the Abbot of Saint Pamphilius laughed. He sat well back in his

chair and looked at the squire with freshened interest. "Granted, Bold Wit! The point is this. Did you show me here the signet ring, not — God defend us! — of Raimbaut the Six-fingered, but of Raimbaut's lord and yours, Savaric of Montmaure, then would I say, 'So you have your patron! Good fortune, fair kinsman, who are half-way up the ladder!'" He looked at the squire and laughed. "You have it not by you, I think?" Garin shook his head. "Well then," said the abbot, "choose Holy Church. For here, I think," — he spoke very goldenly, — "you may show a patron. A feeble one, my son — of course, a feeble one —"

Garin came from behind Foulque, kneeled before the abbot, and thanked him for great kindness and condescension. "But, Reverend Father, with all gratefulness and humbleness, yet I will not the tonsure —"

The abbot with a gesture kept him kneeling. "There is some reason here that you hide. You are young, you are young! I guess that your reason goes by name of woman —"

Garin knelt silent, but Foulque uttered an exclamation. "No, Reverend Father, no! What has changed him I know not, but it has happened here at Castel-Noir, since yesterday! There is no woman here, in hut or tower, that could tempt him —"

But the Abbot of Saint Pamphilius continued to gaze upon Garin, and to tap gently with his fingers upon the arm of the great chair. "I hold not," he

said softly, "with those who would condone concubinage, and who see no harm in a too fair cousin, niece, or servant in priests' dwellings. It is all sin — it is all sin — and Holy Church must reprobate — yea, must chastise. But flesh is weak, my son, flesh is weak! Somewhat may be compounded — somewhat overlooked — somewhat pardoned! Especially, if not solely, in the case of those whose service is great. As for courtly love—" The abbot smiled. "When you come to courtly love," he said, "there are many lordly churchmen have praised fair ladies! — Do I resolve your scruples, my son?"

But Garin's look showed no shaken determination. The abbot leaned back in his chair. "The time grows tender," he said. "Womanish and tender! Your father would have known how to bring you to reason. Your grandfather would have disposed of you like any Roman of old. But now any sir squire is let to say, 'I will' — or 'I will not!' — Think not that I wish him about me who is sullen and intractable! Nor that I lack other kinsmen who are pleaders for that kindness I would have shown Castel-Noir! There is young Enric, Bernart's son — and there are others. — Rise and begone to Raimbaut the Six-fingered's keep!"

Garin stood up. Foulque made to speak, but the abbot waved the matter down.

"All is said. It is a trifle, and we will disturb ourselves no further. God knows, ungrateful young men

are no rarity! Doubtless he hath, after all, Montmaure's signet — What is it now?"

Into the hall, from the court without, had come a sound of trampling hoofs and of voices — one voice sullen and heavy. Garin started violently, Foulque sprang to his feet. The great door was flung open, admitting a burst of wind that shook the hangings, and behind it, Sicart open-mouthed and breathless.

"Master, master! here is Lord Raimbaut!"

CHAPTER V

RAIMBAUT THE SIX-FINGERED

A LORD might of course visit one who held from him, often did so. But it was not Raimbaut's use to ride to Castel-Noir. And Garin, parting from him less than a week ago, had heard no word of his coming.

But here he was, pushing Sicart aside, striding into the hall, a low-browed, thick-skulled giant, savage with his foes, dull and grudging with his friends — Raimbaut the Six-fingered! Foulque hastened to do him reverence, make him welcome; Garin, stepping to his side, took from him his wide, rust-hued mantle and furred cap.

"Well met, my Lord Raimbaut!" said the abbot in his golden tones.

Raimbaut gloomed upon him. "Ha, Lord Abbot! Are you here for this springald, my esquire? Well, I have said that you might have him."

"Nay," said the abbot mellowly, "I think that I want him not."

"— have him," pursued Raimbaut. "And likewise his quarrel with Savaric of Montmaure."

He spoke with a deep, growling voice, as of an angered mastiff, and as he spoke turned like one

upon Garin. "Why, by every fiend in hell, did you fight a Tuesday, with his son?"

Garin stared. He heard Foulque's distressed exclamation, saw the abbot purse his lips, but beyond all that he had a vision of a forest glade and heard a clash of steel. He drew breath. "Was he that knight in crimson? Was that Jaufre de Montmaure?"

Raimbaut doubled his fist and advanced it. Before this Garin had come to earth beneath his lord's buffet. He awaited it now, standing as squarely as he might. He was aware that Raimbaut had for him a kind of thwart liking — a liking that made, in Raimbaut's mind, no reason why he should not strike when angry. It was not the expected blow that set Garin's mind whirling. But Jaufre de Montmaure! To his knowledge he had never, until that Tuesday, seen that same Jaufre. But he knew of him, oh, knew of him! Montmaure was a great count, overlord of towns and many castles. In Garin's world Savaric of Montmaure was only less than Gaucelm of Roche-de-Frêne — Gaucelm the Fortunate from whom Savaric held certain fiefs. Immediately, Montmaure loomed larger than Roche-de-Frêne, for Raimbaut the Six-fingered owed direct fealty to Montmaure and in war must furnish a hundred men-at-arms.

Garin knew of the young count, Sir Jaufre. He knew that Jaufre had been long time in Italy, at the court where his mother was born, but that now

he was looked for home again. He knew that he had fought boldly in sieges of cities, and in tournaments was acclaimed brave and fortunate. Perhaps Garin had dreamed of his own chance coming to him by way of Montmaure — perhaps he had dreamed of somehow recommending himself to this same Jaufre. That gibe of the abbot's about the signet ring had struck from the squire an answering thought, "Some day I may —" Now came the reversal, now Garin felt a faintness, an icy fall. He was young and in a thousand ways, unfree. For a day and a night his conscious being had strained high. Now there came a dull subsidence, a slipping toward the abyss. "Jaufre de Montmaure!"

Raimbaut did not deliver the meditated blow — too angered and concerned was Raimbaut to dispense slight tokens. He let his hand drop, but ground beneath his heavy foot the rushes on the floor. "I would I had had you chained in the pit below the dungeon before I let you go to Roche-de-Frêne!" He turned on Foulque who stood, grey-faced and dry-lipped. "Knew you what this fool did?"

Foulque struck his hands together. "He told me that eve. He did not know and I did not know — He thought it might be some wandering knight — Ah, my Lord Raimbaut, as we owe you service, so do you owe us protection!"

Raimbaut strode up and down, heavy and black as his own ancient donjon. "Comes to me yestereve,

as formal as you please, a herald from Montmaure! 'Hark and hear,' says he, puffing out his cheeks, 'to what befell our young lord, Sir Jaufre, riding through the forest called La Belle, and for some matter or other sending a good way ahead those that rode with him. Came a squire out of the wood, drunken and, as it were, mad, and with him, plain to be seen, a stark fiend! Then did the two fall upon Sir Jaufre from behind and forced him to fight, and by necromancy overthrew and wounded him, and, ignobly and villainously, bound him to a tree. Which, when they had done, they vanished. And straightway his men found him and brought him home. And now that fiend may perchance not be found, but assuredly the man may be discovered! When he is, for his foul pride, treason, and wizardry, the Count of Montmaure will flay him alive and nail him head downward to a tree.'"

Mistral sent into the hall a withering blast. The smoke from the fire blew out and went here and there in wreaths. It set the abbot coughing. Raimbaut the Six-fingered continued his striding up and down. "Then he puffs his cheeks out and says on, and wits me to know that Savaric of Montmaure calls on every man that owes him fealty to discover — an he is known to them — that churl and misdoer. And thereupon," ended Raimbaut on a note of thunder, "to my face he describes Garin my esquire!"

Garin stood silent, but Foulque panted hard.

"Ah, thou unhappy! Ah, the end of Castel-Noir! Ah, my Lord Raimbaut, have we not been faithful liegemen?" He caught his brother by the arm. "Kneel, Garin — and I will kneel —"

But Garin did not kneel. He stood young, straight, pale with indignation. "Brother and Reverend Father and my Lord Raimbaut," he cried, "never in my life had I to do with a fiend! Nor was I drunken nor without sense! Nor did I come upon him from behind! Does he say that, then am I more glad than I was that I brought him fairly to the earth and, because of his own treachery, tied him to a tree and bound his hands with his stirrup leather —"

Raimbaut, in his striding up and down being close to his squire, turned upon him at this and delivered the buffet. It brought Garin, hand and knee, upon the rushes, but he rose with lightness. Raimbaut, striding on by, came to the abbot, who, having ended coughing, sat, double chin on hand and foot in furred slipper, tapping the floor. He stopped short, feudal lord beside as massive ecclesiastic. "The Church says it is her part to counsel! Out then with good counsel!"

The abbot looked at him aslant, then spoke with a golden voice. "Did you tell the count's herald that it was your esquire?"

"Not I! I said that it had a sound of Aimeric of the Forest's men." Aimeric of the Forest was a lord with whom Raimbaut was wont to wage private war.

The abbot murmured "Ah!" then, "Did any in your castle betray him?"

"No," said Raimbaut. "Only Guilhelm, and Hugonet heard surely and knew for certain. Six-fingered we may be and rude, but we wait a bit before we give our esquires to other men's deaths!" Again he covered with his stride the space before the wide hearth. He was as huge as a boar and as grim, but a certain black tenseness and danger seemed to go out of the air of the hall. Turning, he again faced the abbot. "So I think, now the best wit that I can find is to say 'Aye' twice where I have already said it once, and speed this same Garin the fighter into Church's fold! Let him as best he may convoy himself to the Abbey of Saint Pamphilius. There he may be turned at once into Brother Such-an-one. So he will be as safe and hid as if he were in Heaven and Our Lady drooped her mantle over him. By degrees Montmaure may forget, or he may flay the wrong man —"

The abbot covered his mouth with his hand and looked into the blaze that mistral drove this way and that. Foulque came close, with a haggard, wrinkling face; but Garin, having risen from Raimbaut's buffet, made no other motion.

The abbot dropped his hand and spoke. "Do you not know that last year the Count of Montmaure became Advocate and Protector of the Abbey of Saint Pamphilius? As little as Lord Raimbaut do I will openly to offend Count Savaric."

"'Openly,'" cried Foulque. "Ah, Reverend Father, it would not be 'openly'—"

But Abbot Arnaut shook his head. "I know your 'secret help,'" he said goldenly. "It is that which most in this world getteth simple and noble, lay and cleric, into trouble!" He spread his hands. "Moreover, our Squire-who-fights-knights hath just declined the tonsure."

"Hath he so?" exclaimed Raimbaut. "He is the more to my liking! — So the abbot will let Count Savaric take him?"

The abbot put his fingers together. "I will do nothing," he said, "that will imperil the least interest of Holy Mother Church. I will never act to the endangering of one small ornament upon her robe."

Raimbaut made a sound like the grunt of a boar. Foulque covered his face with his hands.

"But," pursued the abbot, "kin is kin, and in the little, narrow lane that is left me I will do what I can!" He spoke to Raimbaut. "Has Count Savaric bands out in search of him?"

"Aye. They will look here as elsewhere."

Garin stood forth. Above his eye was a darkening mark, sign of Raimbaut's buffet. It was there, but it did not depreciate something else which was likewise there and which, for the moment, made of his whole body a symbol, enduing it to an extent with visible bloom, apparent power. For many hours there had been an inward glowing. But heretofore to-day, what with Foulque and Abbot Arnaut and disputes,

anxieties, and preoccupation, it had been somewhat pushed away, stifled under. Now it burst forth, to be seen and felt by others, though not understood. Anger and outrage at that knight's false accusation helped it forth. And — though Garin himself did not understand this — that glade in the forest toward Roche-de-Frêne, and that lawn of the poplar, the plane, and the cedar by the Convent of Our Lady in Egypt, that Tuesday and that Thursday, came somehow into contact, embraced, reinforced each the other. Aware, or unaware, in his conscious or in his unconscious experience, there was present a deep and harmonious vibration, an expansion and intensification of being. Something of this came outward and crossed space, to the others' apprehension. They felt bloom and they felt beauty, and they stared at him strangely, as though he were palely demigod.

He spoke. "Brother Foulque and Lord Raimbaut and Reverend Father, let me cut this knot! I must leave Castel-Noir and leave my Lord Raimbaut's castle, and I must take my leave without delay. That is plain. Plain, too, that I must not go in this green and brown that I wore when I fought him! Sicart can find me serf's clothing. When it is night, I will quit Castel-Noir, and I will lie in the fir wood, near the little shrine, five miles west of here. In the morning you, Reverend Father, pass with your train. The help that Foulque and I ask is that you will let me join the Abbey people. They have

scarcely seen me — Sicart shall cut my hair and darken my face — they will not know me. But do you, of your charity, bid one of the brothers take me up behind him. Let me overtravel in safe company sufficient leagues to put me out of instant clutch of Count Savaric and that noble knight, Sir Jaufre! I will leave you short of the Abbey of Saint Pamphilius."

"And where then, Garin, where then?" cried Foulque.

"I will go," said Garin, "toward Toulouse and Foix and Spain. Give me, Foulque, what money you can. I will go in churl's guise until I am out and away from Montmaure's reach. Then in some town I will get me a fit squire's dress. If you can give me enough to buy a horse — very good will that be!" He lifted and stretched his arms — a gesture that ordinarily he would not have used in the presence of elder brother, lord, or churchman. "Ah!" cried Garin, "then will I truly begin life — how, I know not now, but I will begin it! Moreover, I will live it, in some fashion, well!"

The three elder men still stared at him. Mature years, advantageous place, bulked large indeed in their day. A young Daniel might be very wise, but was he not *young?* A squire might propose the solution of a riddle, but it were unmannerly for the squire to take credit; a mouse might gnaw the lion's net, but the mouse remained mouse, and the lion lion. The Abbot of Saint Pamphilius, and Raim-

baut the Six-fingered, and Foulque the elder brother looked doubtfully at Garin. But the air of bloom and light and power held long enough. They devised no better plan, and, for the time at least, their minds subdued themselves and put away anger and ceased to consider rebuke.

Raimbaut spoke. "I give you leave. I have not been a bad lord to you."

His squire looked at him with shining eyes. "No, lord, you have not. I thank you for much. And some day if I may I will return good for good, and pay the service that I owe!"

Foulque the Cripple limped from the hearth to a chest by the wall, unlocked it with a key hanging from his belt, and took out a bag of soft leather — a small bag and a lank. He turned with it. "You shall have wherewith to fit you out. Escape harm now, little brother! But when the wind has ceased to blow, come back —"

The abbot seemed to awake from a dream, and, awakening, became golden and expansive even beyond his wont. "You hear him say himself that he has no vocation. . . . Nay, if he begins so early by overthrowing knights he may be called, who knoweth? to become a column and pattern of chivalry! I will bring him safe out of the immediate clutch of danger."

An hour, and Raimbaut departed, and none outside the hall of Castel-Noir knew aught but that, hunting a stag, he had come riding that way. The

sun set, and the abbot and his following had supper and Garin served his brother and Abbot Arnaut. Afterwards, it was said about the place that the company — having a long way to make — would ride away before dawn. So, after a few hours sleep, all did arise by torchlight and ate a hasty breakfast, and the horses and mules and the abbot's palfrey stamped in the courtyard. Mistral was dead and the air cool, still, and dark. The swung torches confused shadow and substance. In the trampling and neighing and barking of dogs, clamour and shifting of shapes, it went unnoticed that only Foulque was there to bid farewell to the abbot and kinsman.

In the early night, under the one cypress between the tower and the wall, Foulque and Garin had said farewell. The light was gone from about Garin; he seemed but a youth, poor and stricken, fleeing before a very actual danger. The two brothers embraced. They shed tears, for in their time men wept when they felt like doing so. They commended each other to God and Our Lady and all the saints, and they parted, not knowing if ever they would see each other again.

The abbot and his company wound down the zigzag road and turned face toward the distant Abbey of Saint Pamphilius. Riding westward they came into the fir wood. The sun was at the hill-tops, when they overtook a limping pedestrian, — a youth in a coarse and worn dress, with shoes of poor leather and leggings of bark bound with thongs, and with a

caped hood that obscured his features. Questioned, he said that his father sowed grain and reaped it for Castel-Noir, but that he had an uncle who was a dyer and lived beyond Albi. His uncle was an old man and had somewhat to leave and his father had got permission for him to go on a visit — and he had hurt his foot. With that he looked wistfully at the horse of the lay brother who had summoned him to the abbot.

"Saint Gilles!" exclaimed the abbot, and he spoke loud and goldenly. "It were a long way to hop to Albi! Not a day but I strive to plant one kindly deed — Take him up, my son, behind thee!"

CHAPTER VI

THE GARDEN

THE Abbot of Saint Pamphilius and Garin the squire rode westward — that is to say they rode away from the busy town of Roche-de-Frêne; the cathedral, where, atop the mounting tower, trowel clinked against stone; the bishop's palace, where, that morning Ugo wrote a letter to Pope Alexander; and the vast castle with Gaucelm the Fortunate's banner above it.

Roche-de-Frêne dyed with scarlet second only to that of Montpellier. It wove fine stuffs, its saddlers were known for their work, it made good weapons. Rome had left it a ruined amphitheatre — not so large as that at Arles, but large enough to house a trade. Here was the quarter of the moulders of candles. A fair wine was made in the country round-about, brought to Roche-de-Frêne and sold, and thence sold again. It was a mart likewise for great, creamy-flanked cattle. They came in droves over the bridge that crossed the river and were sold and bought without the walls, in the long, poplar-streaked field where was held the yearly fair.

It was not a free town — not yet. Time was when its people had been serfs wholly, chattels and thralls completely of the lords who built the great castle.

Less than a hundred years ago that was still largely true. Then had entered small beginnings, fragmentary privileges, rights of trade, commutations, market grants. These had increased; every decade saw a little freedom filched. Lords must have wealth, and the craftsmen and traders made it; money-rent entered in place of old obediences. Silver paid off body-service. Skill increased, and the number of wares made, and commerce in them. Wealth increased. The town grew bolder and consciously strove for small liberties. Roche-de-Frêne was different now indeed from the old times when it had been wholly servile. It was growing with the strong twelfth century. All manner of ideas entered its head.

Gaucelm the Fortunate's father had been Gaucelm the Crusader, Gaucelm of the Star. Certain of the ideas of the burghers of Roche-de-Frêne had been approved by this prince. Others found themselves stingingly rebuked. One of Roche-de-Frêne's concepts of its own good might flourish in court favour, a second just exist like grass under a stone, wan and sere, a third encounter all the forces of extirpation. In the main Gaucelm of the Star bore hardly against the struggle for liberty. But at the last he took the cross, and needing moneys so that he might go to Jerusalem with great array, granted "privileges." After three years he returned from Palestine and granted no more. He died and Gaucelm the Fortunate reigned. For five years he fought the ideas

of Roche-de-Frêne. Then he changed, almost in a night-time, and granted almost more than was asked. His barons and knights stared and wondered; Gaucelm was no weakling. Roche-de-Frêne sat down to digest and assimilate what it had gained. The town was no more radical than it thought reasonable. The meal was sufficient for the time being. There began a string of quiet years.

The bishop's palace stood a long building, with wings at right angles. Before it spread a flagged place, and in the middle of this a fountain jetted, the water streaming from dolphins' jaws. In old times the bishops of Roche-de-Frêne had been mightier than its ravening, war-shredded lords. Then had arisen the great line that built the castle and subdued the fiefs and turned from baron to prince and outweighed the bishops. The fountain, shifting its spray as the wind blew, had seen a-many matters, a-many ambitions rise and fall and rise again.

The fountain streamed and the spray shifted this autumn, while the trees turned to gold and bronze and the grapes were gathered, and through the countryside bare feet of peasants trod the wine-press, and over the bridge in droves lowed the cream-hued cattle. It rose and fell time before and time after that feast-day on which the squire Garin had knelt in the cathedral dusk between the Palestine pillars, before Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne in blue

samite and a gemmy crown. It streamed and sparkled on a sunny morning when Bishop Ugo, bound for the castle, behind him a secretary and other goodly following, checked his white mule beside the basin and blessed the lounging folk who sank upon their knees.

The process consumed no great while. Ugo was presently riding up the town's chief street, a thoroughfare that marked the ridge pole of the hill of Roche-de-Frêne. People were abroad, and as he passed they did him reverence. He was a great churchman, who could hurt or help them, soul and body, here and hereafter! But at a quieter corner, before a pile of old, dark buildings, he came upon, and that so closely that his mantle almost brushed them, a man and two women, poorly dressed, who stood without movement or appeal for blessing. Had they been viewed at a distance, noted merely for three stony units in a bending crowd, the bishop had been too superb to notice, but here they were under his nose, unreverent, stocks before his eyes, their own eyes gazing as though he were not!

Ugo checked his mule, spoke sharply. "Why, shameless ones, do you not bend to Holy Church, her councillors and seneschals?"

The man spoke. "We bend to God."

"To God within," said one of the women. "Not to ill within — not to luxury, pomp, and tyranny!"

"Woe!" cried the other woman, the younger.

"Woe when the hearth no longer warms, but destroys!"

"*Bougres*," spoke the secretary at his master's ear. "Paulicians, Catharists, *Bons hommes*, Perfecti, Manichees."

"That is to say, heretics," said Ugo. "They grow hideously bold, having Satan for saviour and surety! Take order for these. Lodge complaint against them. See them laid fast in prison."

The younger woman looked at him earnestly. "Ah, ah!" she said. "Thou poor prisoner! Let me whisper thee — there is a way out of thy dark hold! If only the door is not too high and wide and fully open for thine eyes to see it!"

"They are not of Roche-de-Frêne," spoke the secretary. "I warrant them from Toulouse or Albi!"

"I, and more than I, have eyes upon Count Raymond of Toulouse," said the bishop. "Two or three of you take these wretches to the right officer. And do thou, Nicholas, appear against them to-morrow."

He touched his mule with his riding switch and rode on, a dark-browed man, with a thin cheek and thin, close-shutting lips. He was a martial bishop; he had fought in Sicily and at Damascus and Edessa, and at Constantinople.

The street ran steeply upward, closing where, in the autumn day, there spread and towered the castle. Ugo, approaching moat and drawbridge, put

with a customary action his hand over his lips and so regarded outer and inner walls, the southward-facing barbican and the towers that flanked it, — Lion Tower and Red Tower. Men-at-arms in number lounged within the gate, straightening when the warder cried the bishop's train. Ugo took his hand from his lips and crossed the hollow-sounding bridge. He rode beneath the portcullis and through the deep, reverberating, vaulted passage opening on either hand into Lion Tower and Red Tower, and so came to the court of dismounting, where esquires and pages started into activity. From here he was marshalled, the secretary and a couple of canons behind him, to the Court of Honour, where met him other silken pages.

They bowed before him. "Lord Bishop, our great ones are gathered in the garden, harkening to troubadours."

One of higher authority came and took the word from them. "My lord, I will lead you to where these rossignols are singing! They sing in honour of ladies, and of the court's guest, the duke from Italy who would marry our princess!"

They moved through a noble, great hall, bare of all folk but doorkeepers.

"Will the match be made?" asked Ugo.

"We do not know," answered his conductor. "Our Lady Alazais favours it. But we do not know the mind of Prince Gaucelm."

Ugo walked in silence. His own mind was granting

with anger the truth of that. Presently he spoke in a measured voice. "If it be made, it will be a fair alliance. Undoubtedly a good marriage! For say that to our sorrow Prince Gaucelm hath never a son of his own, then it may come that his daughter's son rule that duchy and this land."

"Dame Alazais," said the other in a tone of discreetness, "hath been six years a wife. The last pilgrimage brought naught, but the next may serve."

"Pray Our Lady it may!" answered Ugo with lip-devoutness, "and so Gaucelm the Fortunate become more fortunate yet. — The Princess Audiart hath been from home."

"Aye, at Our Lady in Egypt's. But she is returned, the prince having sent for her. Hark! Raimon de Saint-Rémy is singing."

There was to be heard, indeed, a fine, manly voice coming from where, through an arched exit, they now had a glimpse of foliage and sky. It sang loudly and boldly, a chanson of the best, a pæan to woman's lips and throat and breast, a proud, determined declaration of slavery, a long, melodious cry for mistress mercy.

The bishop stood still to listen. "Ha!" he said, "many a song like that does my Lady Alazais hear!"

"Just," answered his companion. "When they look on her they begin to sing."

Moving forward they stood within the door that gave upon the garden. It lay before them, a velvet

sward enclosed by walls, with a high watch-tower pricked against the eastern heavens.

"It is a great pity," said Ugo guardedly, "that the young princess stands so very far from her step-dame's loveliness!"

"Aye, the court holds it a pity."

"The prince hath an extraordinary affection toward her."

"As great as if she were a son! She hath wit to please him, — though," said he who acted usher, "she doth not please every one."

They passed a screen of fruit trees and came upon a vision first of formal paths with grass, flowers, and aromatic herbs between, then of a wide raised space, stage or dais, of the smoothest turf that ever was. It had a backing of fruit trees, and behind these of grey wall and parapet, and it was attained by shallow steps of stone. On these, and on low seats and cushions and on banks of turf, sat or half-reclined men and women, for the most part youthful or in the prime of life. Others stood; others, men and women, away from the raised part, strolled through the garden that here was formal and here maintained a studied rusticity. The men wore neither armour nor weapons, save, maybe, a dagger. Men and women were very richly dressed, for even where was perpetual state, this was an occasion.

In a greater space than a confined castle garden they would not have seemed so many; as it was there appeared a throng. In reality there might be a hun-

dred souls. The castle was as populous as an ant-heap, but here was only the garland of the castle. The duke who was seeking a mate had with him the very spice-pink of his own court. He and they were of the garden. The festival that was made for him had drawn neighbouring barons and knights, vassals of Gaucelm. There was no time when such a court failed to entertain travellers of note, wandering knights, envoys of sorts, lords going in state to Italy on the one hand, to France or Spain or England on the other. Of such birds of passage several were in the garden. And there were troubadours of more than local fame, poets so great that they travelled with their own servants and jongleurs. When the bishop came with two canons in his train there were churchmen. And, moving or seated, glowed bright dames and damosels.

But in the centre sat Alazais, and she seemed, indeed, of Venus's meinie. She was a fair beauty, with deep-red, perfect lips, and a curve of cheek and throat to make men tremble. Her long brown eyes, set well apart, had a trick of always looking from between half-shut lids. Her limbs spoke the same languor, and yet she had strength, strength, it seemed, of a pard or a great serpent. She was not pard and she was not serpent; she was not evil. She was — Alazais, and they all sang to her. Even though they did not name her name; even though they used other names.

There were four chairs of state, though not set

arow. Only two were occupied — that in which sat ivory-and-gold Alazais, and that in which sat the duke who had come to view Prince Gaucelm's daughter. The duke sat over against Alazais, with a strip of green grass between. He was not beautiful: he had a shrunk form and a narrow, weazened face. But he stared at the beauty before him, and a slight shiver went through him with a fine prickling. "Madonna!" he thought. "If the other were his wife, and this his daughter!"

Ugo came to the green level. Alazais rose to greet him and the duke followed her. He had informed himself in the politics of Roche-de-Frêne: he knew that though now there was peace between prince and bishop, it had not always been so and might not be so again. The duke was no great statesman, but to every one, at the moment, he was as smooth as an innate, cross-grained imperiousness would let him be. A fair seat was found for my lord bishop, the two canons and the secretary standing behind him.

"Ah, my lord," said Alazais, "you are good to grace our idle time! Our poets have sung and will sing again, and then myself and all these ladies are pledged to judge of a great matter. Sir Gilles de Valence, what is the matter?"

The troubadour addressed bent the knee. "Princess, the history of Madame Dido, and if she were not the supremest servant of Love who would not survive, not the death but the leave-taking of her

knight, Messire Æneas, but made a pyre and burned herself thereon! And of her example, as lover, to fair ladies, and if they should not, emulating her, — in a manner of figure and not, most fair, with actual flames! — withdraw themselves, as it were, from being and existence throughout the time that flows between the leave-taking and coming again of their knights. And of Messire Æneas, and if Love truly had him in bonds."

"Truly, a fair matter!" said Ugo, with hidden scorn. "Here are the prince and the Princess Audiart!"

Dais and garden broke off their talk, turned with a flash of colour and a bending movement toward the lord of the land.

Gaucelm the Fortunate came upon the scene with an easy quietness. He was a large man, wearing a *bliaut* of dark silk, richly belted, and around his hair, that was a silvering brown, a fillet or circlet of gold. There breathed about him something easy, humorous, wise. He did not talk much, but what he said was to the purpose. Now he had a profound and brooding look, and now his eye twinkled. In small things he gave way; where he saw it his part to be firm he was firm enough. Though he listened to many, the many did not for ever see their way taken. He may have been religious, but he exhibited little or nothing of his time's religiosity. He had a stilly way of liking the present minute and putting much into it. He did not laugh too easily, but yet

he seemed to find amusement in odd corners where none else looked for it. He was not fond of state, but relaxed it when he could, yet kept dignity. He came now into the castle garden with but a few attending, and beside him, step for step, moved the young princess, his daughter Audiart.

CHAPTER VII

THE UGLY PRINCESS

She had a way of dressing, for preference, in dark hues, reds like wine or the deeper parts of rubies, blues like the ripened bunches between the vineyard leaves, browns like a Martinmas wood. To-day she wore the latter hue. Around her head was a golden fillet, but no other tire. She wore to-day no Eastern veil, nor did her long, dark hair, securely braided, give shadow to her face. Her shape was good, a slender shape, endued with nervous strength. But her face showed plain, dark, and thin, intelligent, but with features irregular beyond the ordinary. The Court of Roche-de-Frêne, beneath its breath, called her the Ugly Princess. She sat now beside her step-mother, Alazais, and made a foil for that lovely dame.

In the past two generations there had come a change in the world. True it was that to appearance it affected only a small ring — only the top strata, the capstones of the feudal system; only the world of lords and knights and poets and "ladies." As the jongleur had told Garin, it was not supposed to descend to shepherdesses. Even in the other world by no means was it always present. Sometimes the lack of it was as shocking as might be. Sometimes it was

there only in very small part, only in unimportant issues. Sometimes it was mere affectation. Sometimes it was used as a mask, and behind it went on ill realities. But it had itself come into the world as a reality. It knew motion and growth, and it manifested itself, though in degrees. There was much alloy, but at its purest and best it was a golden thing, a flower of light. It called itself chivalric love.

Here and there it was pure and in action, but in between and all around was imitation, a little gold drawn out into much filagree. The filagree was the fashion; it drew being from the real, but the depth of its being was slight. But it was the fashion, no doubt of that. As the jongleur had said, it raged. Where it was received, in court and castle, hall and bower, sensuality grew sensuousness with sparks of something higher. But the framework of feudal society imposed all manner of restrictions. The elaborate gradation of rank, the perpetual recurrence of "lord" and "vassal," the swords about women, marriage that was bargaining for wealth and power — all blocked the torrent's natural course. Thrown back upon itself, the feeling inbred artifices and illusions, extravagances, sometimes monstrosities. It became the mock-heroic, the pseudo-passionate. It cultivated a bright-hued fungus garden of sentimentality. It rose from earth, not by its own wings but by some Icarian apparatus that the first fire scorched away. It picked up the bright dropped feathers of the true bird of Paradise, but though it made a

mantle of them, its own hue showed beneath. It did not understand what it was that it admired, but it made a cult of the admiration. . . . And yet all the while there was something real, and Extravagance and Mistake were dimly its seekers. Life was richer and longer of stride than it had used to be. A host of perceptions had at last melted into a concept of mutual love such as had not before been in the earth. Those that the crown fell upon might be silent or not, but no one else was silent. It was the Discovery — the age's Indies — and polite conversation came round to it as the needle to the pole. Nay, *conversazioni* were planned to discuss this and this alone. Troubadours sang in contests songs of love — and once more songs of love. Now and again they might dispute other matters in a *tenso*, lash the time's recognized vices in a *sirvente*. But these were asides. Their true business was to sing of love and lovers and the service of love. Some sang with a springtime freshness, force, and simplicity. Some took all that was strained, far-fetched, and hectic in the time's regard of the Discovery and made of it a heady drink.

To-day this garden sat or stood to consider Love — that is, to consider love of an individual of one sex for an individual of the other. Here were knights who, when they fought, tied their lady's sleeve or girdle about arm or helm. Here were troubadours of note, each of whom flung far and wide through the land the praise of some especial

fair. And here were women who were thus praised and sung.

The age greatly lauded virginity in the abstract. But — saving the saints in heaven and abbesses on earth — precedence in fact was given by the world of chivalry to the married woman. Public opinion required of wedded great dames — perhaps in most cases received — essential regard for their lords' honour. This granted, for love they were let turn elsewhere. Theirs chiefly, though not solely, were the knights, the troubadours, the incense, the poesy. Marriage came so early, marriage was so plainly the rule, that the unwed in evidence — the throngs of nuns making another story — were almost always young girls indeed, buds of flowers, somewhat ill at ease with the opened roses. But largely they were of the rose kind, and, in the bloomy ring of wedded dames, sighed to in *canzons*, "fair friends" of knight and poet, but saw themselves a little further on. Those in the garden were not of the very youngest, and they were used to courts and not ill at ease. They were rosebuds very sweet, and they took their share of lauds. From them all the ugly princess differed subtly.

It was not merely that she differed when faces were compared. What others might think could not of course appear, but the duke, who had considered an alliance with Roche-de-Frêne, thought her deficient in every power to please. It was right enough that, in the presence of her father and step-dame,

before the perhaps oppressive loom of her own possible good fortune, she should keep silence. But she should look fair and complying, not be such an one that the world might say, "Our Duke chose a poor little land, under a gloomy sky!" And when she did speak she should speak with sense and *à propos*. As it was, she spoke folly.

For instance. There had been introduced a jongleur, a Babylonish-looking fellow, who had narrated at length and with action the history of Dido. He had ended amid acclaim and had been given largesse. Following the lesser art and performer had come the major — burst into song the troubadours. They parted between them the passion of the Carthaginian Queen. One took the May of it, one the July, one the Winter. They soared to Olympus and pleaded it before the Court of Love; they came down to Europe and placed it in the eye of brave knights and sweet ladies. The duke was moved. He began to lean toward Alazais; then, policy and the beauty of a virtuous action prevailing, he bent instead toward the only one there who could link together his dukedom and Roche-de-Frêne. "Fair, sweet princess, what think you of this great lover, Queen Dido?"

Then had the changeling shown oddness and folly. She lifted eyes that were *vair* or changeable, and neither shy nor warm, and spoke in a voice as dry as a Candlemas reed. "I hold," she said, "that in that matter of the bull's hide, she was wise."

She said no more and her eyes fell again upon her

long, brown hands. They were as brown as a berry; they looked as though she had been roving like an Egyptian. The duke had a strong movement of distaste. She appeared to him as Babylonish as the jongleur.

The court seemed used to her. Naturally, it failed in no observance. She had her ladies, and a page stood at her call. The troubadours when they sang bent to her as they bent to the other chairs of state. Lord and knight made due obeisance. That marvellous Alazais spoke to her ever and anon, and she answered. But her words were few and short; the duke saw that she had not the gift of discourse. He saw no gift that she had. Certainly, she was not trying to please a great duke. It was not that she showed any discourtesy — that were impossible. But there was no right sense of his presence. She sat, young and without beauty, unsmiling, her eyes now upon the watchtower drawn against the blue, and now upon the face of the singer. They said that Prince Gaucelm doated upon her. He was her father — let him doat!

"What shall a knight do for his lady?
He shall love her, love her, pardie!"

sang Gilles de Valence, reprobation of Messire Æneas being now in hand.

"All his nights and all his days
He shall study but her praise.
Her word against all words he weigheth,
Saith she 'Stay,' in joy he stayeth.

Saith she 'Go,' all meek he goeth.
A heart in chains is all he knoweth,
From other wit release he showeth!
Wit may plead, but Love is nigher,
Jove may call, but Love calls higher!
What shall a knight do for his lady?
He shall love her, love her, pardie!
All his nights and all his days,
He shall study but her praise!"

Applause arose. Raimon de Saint-Rémy took his lute. But the duke noted how stiff and silent sat the ugly princess.

The entertainment of that forenoon over, they went to dinner — a considerable concourse, so considerable that when all were seated the great hall appeared to blossom like the garden. At the table of state sat the prince and Alazais and the Princess Audiart, the duke, Bishop Ugo, and three or four others whom Gaucelm would honour. Musicians played in a gallery. Waiting men in long procession brought the viands — venison and peacocks, pasties of all kinds, mutton, spitted small birds, wheaten bread — a multitude of matters. Afterwards came cakes and tarts, with many fruits. Always there was wine served in rich cups. The oddity to a later taste would have been the excess of seasoning, — the pepper, saffron, ginger, cloves, the heat and pungency of the solid meats, — and then the honey dropped in wine. At the prince's table a knight carved, at the others the noblest esquires. The apparel of the tables was rich; there were gold and silver vessels

of many sorts, dishes, bowls, fine knives and spoons, — but, high and low, no fork.

The hall was very large, and so the talk of many people, subdued in tone as, of late years, good manners had learnt to demand, created no more than a pleasant deep humming. For the most part the talk ran upon love, arms, and policy, the latest, most resounding public events, and the achievements and abilities, personal adventures and misadventures, of various members of the company. At the raised table it was high politics and what was occurring in the world of rulers, for that was what the duke liked to talk about and the prince bent the conversation to suit his guest. Bishop Ugo liked it, too. Ugo's mind ran at times from realm to realm, but there was a main land in which he was most at home. In that he passioned, schemed, and strove for Holy Church's temporal no less than spiritual ascendancy. The Hohenstauffen and Pope Alexander — Guelph and Ghibelline — Church and Empire — the new, young French King Philip, suzerain of Roche-de-Frêne — Henry the Second of England and his sons, specifically his son Richard, not so far from here, in Aquitaine — so ran the talk. The visiting duke spoke much, in the tone of peer to them of whom he spoke. Ugo listened close-lipped; now and then he entered eloquently, and always in the Papal service. The prince said little. It was not easy to discover where he stood. The barons at the table took judicious part. The dazzling Alazais displayed a flatter-

ing interest, and the duke, noting that, gave his destrier further rein, shook a more determined lance. He spoke of that same Richard, Duke of Aquitaine, a man much talked of by his time, and he related instances that showed that Richard's strength and weakness. He bore hard upon a fantastic generosity which, appealed to, could at times make Richard change and forsake his dearest plans.

The Princess Audiart sipped her wine. She heard the duke as in a dream. Atop of all the voices in the hall her mind was off in a forest glade. . . . She looked across at the prince her father. She had not told him of that adventure — of how she had desperately tired of Our Lady in Egypt and of her aunt the Abbess and of most of her own women, and would spend one day a-shepherdessing, and had done so. She was going to tell him — even though she reckoned on some anger. She had for Gaucelm a depth of devotion. . . . A forest glade, and an evil knight and a squire in brown and green — and now what were they talking of?

That afternoon half the court rode out a-hawking. The prince did not go; he was heavy now for the saddle. But the duke rode, and the two princesses. The day was good, the sport was fair; the great thing, air and exercise, all obtained without thinking of it. There was much mirthful sound, laughter, men's voices and women's voices. Alazais dazzled; so fair was she on her white palfrey that had its mane tied with little silver bells. The duke rode

constantly by her side. The Princess Audiart had for escort Stephen the Marshal, a goodly baron and knight. The duke was well and correct where he was, Alazais being Gaucelm's princess, and his hostess. Manners demanded toward the younger princess a decorum of restraint and distance. Only this restraint should have been managed with an exquisite semblance of repressed ardour, with a fineness of "Truly a fair and precious link between Houses!" This it was that was missing, and noted as missing by every knight and lady that went a-hawking.

The return to the castle was made in the sunset-glow. Supper followed, and after supper a short interval of repose. Then all met again in the cleared hall and the musicians began to play. Gaucelm in red samite sat upon the dais, and by him the duke in purple. Alazais, in white, with a jewelled zone and a mantle hued like flame, looked Venus come to earth. Beside her sat the ugly princess in dark blue over a silver robe.

Before them, on the floor of the hall, knights and ladies trod an intricate measure. Great candles burned, viols and harps, the jongleurs played their best, varlets stationed by the walls scattered Eastern perfumes. The duke, with a word to the prince his host, rose and bending to Alazais offered his hand. All watched this couple — the measure over, all acclaimed. The duke led Alazais again to the dais, then did what others must expect of him and he of

himself. "Fair, sweet lady," he said to Gaucelm's daughter. "Will you grace me with this measure?"

The ugly princess gave him her finger-tips. He led her upon the floor and they danced. As the measure, formal and stately, dictated, now they took attitudes before each other, now they came together, palms and fingers touching, now again parted. They were watched with strong interest by the length and breadth of the hall, by both the Court of Roche-de-Frêne and the duke's following. A marriage such as this — say, what men began to doubt, that it came to pass — by no means concerned only the two who married. Thousands of folk were concerned, their children and their children's children.

Gaucelm the Fortunate watched from his dais and his great chair, where he sat with bent elbow and his chin resting upon his hand. Sitting so, he opened his other hand and looked again at a small piece of cotton paper that had been slipped within it. Upon the paper appeared, in the up-and-down, architectural writing of the period, these words: "Messire, my father; do not, of your good pity, make me wed this lord! I will be unhappy. You will be unhappy. He will be unhappy. I do think that our lands and his lands will be unhappy. Messire my father, I do not wish to wed." Prince Gaucelm closed his hand and watched again.

The duke was dancing stiffly, with a bad grace masked as well as he could mask anything that he truly felt. He wished to be prudent, and certainly

it were not prudent to give to Roche-de-Frêne either open or secret offence. Not yet, even, had he determined. — He yet might, and he might not — But he was an arrogant man and a vain, and to his own mind it was important that the world should not think he was fooled. Lasting love between lord and lady, duke and duchess, mattered, forsooth, little enough! It was not in the bond. When it came to beauty, he had seen great queens without beauty of face or form. But the duke, though he had it not himself, demanded that beauty in any woman immediately about him, and with it complaisance, bent head, and burning of incense. And he wished men to envy him, in some sort, all his goods, including the woman whom he would make duchess. That was where Gaucelm was fortunate. What living man, thought the duke, but would like to take from him golden Alazais?

He danced as starkly as though he were in hauberk and helmet, and his hand might have been mailed, so stiffly did it touch Audiart's hand. Who would envy him this Egyptian? He never noted if she danced well or ill, if she had some grace of body or no; he looked for no expression in her face that he might admire. She was outlandish — ugly. There was — as would have become such a changeling — no awe of him, no tremulous fear lest she should not please. He had an injured, hot heart within him. Report had been too careless, bringing him only news that here was a marriageable prin-

cess. He blamed his councillors, determined to withdraw his favour from one who had been called his bosom friend, but who had advocated this match. He blamed Gaucelm, who, to his elaborate letter, had answered only with an invitation to visit Roche-de-Frêne. He should have said: "Fair lord, you do my daughter too much honour, who, you must know —" But chiefly the duke blamed that princess herself.

The measure was over. The duke and the princess returned to the dais. The jongleurs played loudly. The candles burned, the flung perfumes floated through the hall. The music hid the whispers. Gaucelm the Fortunate sat with a slight smile, his chin upon his hand. For an interlude there was brought upon the floor the jongleur who had made part of the forenoon's entertainment. Elias of Montaudon he called himself, and he was skilful beyond the ordinary with balls of coloured glass and Eastern platters and daggers.

The ugly princess wished the taste of that dance taken from her lips. She watched the jongleur, and because he was all in brown and yellow like an autumn leaf and was as light as one and as quick as a woodland creature, he brought the country to her mind and made her see forests and streams. Her mother had been a mountain lady, and she herself would have liked to rove the earth. She sat still, her gaze straight before her, seeing the coloured balls, but beyond them imagined lands and wanderings.

The duke spoke across to the prince her father, and the words came clean and clear to her hearing, and to that of Stephen the Marshal and others standing near. "I have had letters, sir," said the duke, "which make me to think that I am required at home."

CHAPTER VIII

TOURNAMENT

THE next morning they heard mass in the castle chapel. The hour was early, the world all drenched with autumn dews. The prince and the duke and Alazais the Fair and Audiart, and behind them many knights and ladies, kneeled on the stone flooring between the sparks of the altar-lamps and the pink morning light. The chanted Latin rose and fell, the bell rang, all bent. In came a lance of sunlight and the vagrant morning breeze. Mass over, all flowed into the paved court. For to-day there was arranged in the duke's honour, a splendid tourney. Many a good knight would joust — the duke also, it was said. Two hours, and the trumpets would sound. The court was glad when the great folk turned away with their immediate people, and the rest of the world could begin to prepare.

Prince Gaucelm did not tilt. When he was young he had proved himself *preux chevalier*. Now he was not so young, and his body weighed heavy, and all his striving was to be *prud'homme*. When he came to his chamber in the great donjon he dismissed from it all save a chamberlain and a page, and the latter he sent to the princess his daughter with a message that she might come to him now as she

had asked. In as few minutes as might be she came.

There was a window looking to the east, over the castle wall and moat and forth upon the roofs of the town. The prince had here a great chair and a bench with cushions, and the princess was to sit upon the bench. Instead she came and stood beside him, and then slipped to her knees and rested her head against the arm of the chair. "My good father," she said, "my wise father, my dear father, do you love me?"

"You know that I love you," answered Gaucelm, and put his hand upon her head.

"If you do, then it is all safe."

Gaucelm slightly laughed. In the sound was both amusement and anger. "But my guest the duke," he said, "does not love you."

"He loves me most vilely!" said the ugly princess with energy.

Prince Gaucelm mused. "Shall I show offence or no? I have not decided."

"Why show offence?" said the ugly princess. "I am as I am, and he is as he is. Let him go, with smiles and a stirrup-cup, and a 'Fair lord, well met and well parted!'"

"He is a foolish man."

"There are many such — and women. Let him go. I grudge him no happiness, nor a fair wife."

The ugly princess rose from the floor and went and stood by the window. Doves that Gaucelm cher-

ished flew from their cote in the court below across and across the opening. One came and sat upon the sill and preened its feathers.

"This question of fairness has many aspects," said Gaucelm the Fortunate. "The cover in which you are clad is not so bad!—Well, let us take it that this great baron is gone."

"I will make an offering to Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne! But I will thank you, too, — and most, I think."

"It rests," said Gaucelm, "that you must marry."

"Ah, must I so surely?"

Prince Gaucelm regarded her ponderingly, with bent brows. "What is there else for women? You will not be a nun?"

"Not I!"

"Fief by fief," said Gaucelm, "Roche-de-Frêne was built, now by conquest and now by alliance. If I have no son, you are my heir. There is a bell that rings in all men's ears. *Make for your heir betimes a prudent marriage, adding land to land, gold to gold!*"

"Does it ring so joyously in your ears? It does not ring joyously in mine. No, nor with a goodly, solemn sound!"

"It is the world's way," said the prince. "I do not know if it is the right way."

The Princess Audiart watched the dove, iris against the morning sky, then turned, full face, to her father. "I am not fair," she said. "Men who

want just that will never want me. It seems to me also that I am not loving. At times, when I listen to what they say, I want to laugh. I can see great love. But it seems to me that what they see is not great love. . . . Well, but we marry without love! Well, it seems to me that that is very irksome! — Well, but you may have a knight to love, so that it be courtly love and your lord's honour goes unhurt! Well, it seems to me that that is children's love. — I wish not to marry, but to stay here and learn and learn and learn, and with you rule and serve Roche-de-Frêne!"

In the distance a horn was winded. The mounting sun struck strongly upon the roofs of Roche-de-Frêne. The dove spread its wings and flew down to its cote. Voices and a sound of trampling hoofs came from the court, and a nearer trumpet blew.

"Time and the mind have wings," said Prince Gaucelm, "and it is not well to look too far into the future!" He rose from his chair. "Load not the camel and the day too heavily! Let us go now and watch the knights joust."

The tournament was held without the walls, in a long meadow sunk like a floor between verdant slopes of earth. At either end were pavilions, pitched for those who jousted. Midway of the lists appeared a wreathed platform, silken-canopied, built for the great. Right and left of this space of honour was found place for men-at-arms and castle retainers, and likewise for the magistrates of the town and the

more important burghers. But on the other side of the lists there were slopes of turf with out-cropping stones and an occasional well-placed tree, and here the town poured out its workers, men and women. The crowd was cheerful. There surged a loud, beating sea of talk. Up and down and across sprang glitter and light, with sharp notes of colour. Squires and men-at-arms, heralds and pages gave their quota. Nor did there lack priest and pilgrim, — and that though the Church thundered against tournaments, — Jew, free-lance and travelling merchant, jongleur and stroller. All was gay beneath a bright blue sky, and esquires held the knights' horses before the painted pavilions.

The trumpets blew, and out of the castle gates and down the road cut in the living rock came the great folk. When they reached the meadow and the gallery built for them, and when presently all were seated, it was like a long bank of flowers, coloured glories. At each end of the lists waited twenty knights in mail with painted surcoats. Between, over the green meadow, rode and staidly consulted the marshals. Horses neighed, metal jingled, the folk laughed, talked, gesticulated, now and then disputed. Jongleurs picked at stringed instruments, trumpeters made a gay shower of notes. Towers and battlements closed the scene, and the walled town spread upon the hilltop.

The prince did not tilt, but the duke had granted that during the day he would splinter one lance. His

pavilion was therefore pitched, his shield hung before it, and two esquires walked up and down with a great black stallion. Now, with Stephen the Marshal and with his own knights, he left the gallery of honour and went to arm himself. Edging the lists ran a pathway, wide enough for two horsemen abreast. A railing divided it from the throng. As the duke and his party passed along this road, the crowd, suddenly learning or conjecturing that here was the lord in whose honour was planned the tournament, craned, many-headed, that way. It was very important to know if this lord were going to wed the princess! There were townsmen who had caught the word and called her the ugly princess. As yet they did not know much about her, though they saw her ride through the streets with her father, and that she looked at the people not with haughtiness but attentively. Of Alazais they were proud. Merchants of Roche-de-Frêne, when they travelled far away and there insinuated the praises of home, bragged of the beauty of their lord's wife. Her name was known in Eastern bazaars. — But if there was to be a marriage it was important, and important to know the looks of the bridegroom.

Some crowding took place, some pressing against the wooden barrier. At one point a plane tree, old and gnarled, stretched a bough above the pathway. It made a superb tower of observation and as such had been seized upon. The duke, walking with the marshal, and approaching this tree, became aware of

folk aloft, thick as fruit upon the bough, half-hidden by the bronzing leaves, and more vocal than elsewhere. Certain judgements floated down.

Holiday and festival encouraged licence of speech. The time enforced a reality of obedience from rank to rank, but that provided for, cared not to prevent mere wagging of tongues. The ruling castes never thought it out, but had they done so they might have said that it was not amiss that the people should somewhere indemnify themselves. Let them laugh, exercise their wit, so that it grew not too caustic — be merry-hearted, bold, and familiar! Who held the land held them, but it was pleasanter for the lord himself when the land knew jollity. Add that the courts of the south were more democratic than those of the north, and that Gaucelm was a democratic prince.

The duke was of another temper, — a martinet and a stickler for respect on the part of the vulgar. He caught the comment and flushed. "An unmannerly people!" he said to Stephen the Marshal.

That baron darted an experienced glance. "They are the younger, mechanical sort. Take no heed of them, fair lord."

The remark caught had not been ill-natured, was more jocose than turbulent, might pass where any freedom of speech was accorded. But suddenly came clearly from the bough of the plane tree a genuinely seditious utterance. Given forth in a round, naturally sonorous voice, it carried further than the

speaker intended. "*One day a burgher will be as good as a duke!*"

The great folk were almost beneath that wide-spreading bough. They looked sharply up — the duke, Stephen the Marshal, all the knights. The voice said on, like an oracle aloft among the leaves: "The man in my skin is n't any less than the man in his skin. I say that one day —"

A branch that had served to steady the oracle suddenly broke, snapping short. Amid ejaculations, oracle and branch came together to earth. Down they tumbled, on the inner side of the barrier, upon the grassy path before the duke and Stephen the Marshal.

Laughter arose with, on the knights' side, some angry exclamation. The fallen man got hastily to his feet. "The branch was rotten —" He put a hand to either side his head, seemed to settle it upon his shoulders and recover his wits. "Give me pardon, good lords, for tumbling there like a pippin —" He was a young man, square-shouldered and sturdy, with crisply curling black hair, a determined mouth, and black, bold, and merry eyes.

Stephen the Marshal spoke sternly. "That bough brought you to earth, Thibaut Canteleu, but, an you rein it not, your tongue will bring you into earth!"

The offender turned his cap in his hand. "I spoke not to be heard by great lords," he said. "I know not that I said harm. I said that, change my lord

duke and me, and I might make a fair duke, and he a fair master-saddler and worker in Cordovan! I think that he might, and I will tell you that it taketh skill —"

The duke saw fit to laugh, though after an irritated and peevish fashion. "Roche-de-Frêne," he said, "breeds fair princesses and townsmen with limber tongues! — Well, my Lord Stephen, let us not tarry here!"

Lords and knights passed on toward the pavilions. Thibaut Canteleu, pressed aside, stood close to the barrier until they were gone, then put his hands upon the rail and swung himself up and over. The folk, men and women, received him with laughter, and some admiration, and he laughed at himself. Being a holiday, that was the best thing to do.

A jongleur, a dark Moorish-looking fellow in yellow and brown, accosted him. "Thou poor madhouse citizen! Burgher and knight, lion and lamb, priest and heretic, pope and paynim, villein and lord, jongleur and troubadour, Jean and Jeanne, let us all go to heaven together!"

"We might," answered Thibaut Canteleu sturdily. "That is a fine lute of thine! Play us a tune while we wait."

"Not I!" said the jongleur coolly. "It would demean me. Last night I gave a turn of my art in the hall up yonder, before the prince and all his court. — Who is this coming now, with a green-and-silver banner and fifty men behind him?"

The meadow was pitched by the high road running from the north, and now from this road there turned toward the lists, the holiday crowd, and the wreathed gallery, a troop of half a hundred mounted men, at their head one who seemed of importance. Not only the rustling people on the green banks, but the lists now making final preparation, and the silken-canopied gallery took cognizance of the approach. The troop came nearer. A tall man rode in front upon a bay mare. Behind him an esquire held aloft a spear with a small green-and-silver banner attached. A poursuivant, gorgeously clad, detached himself from the mass and cried out: "Montmaure!"

"Ha!" exclaimed Gaucelm the Fortunate. "Here is Count Savaric!" He spoke to the seneschal. "Take five or six of the best and go meet him. Bring him here with due honour."

"Perhaps," said Alazais, "he will joust. He is a mighty man of his arms and bears down good knights."

The unlooked-for guests were now riding close at hand, coming upon the edge of the meadow, full before the platform of state. So important was this arrival, that for the moment it halted interest in the tourney. All turned to watch the troop with the green-and-silver banner.

Montmaure was less powerful than Roche-de-Frêne, but not greatly less. Roche-de-Frêne held from the French King Philip. Montmaure did hom-

age for his lands to Richard, Duke of Aquitaine. But there was a certain fief, a small barony, — to wit, the one that included Castel-Noir and Raimbaut the Six-fingered's keep, — for which Montmaure had put his hands between the hands of Gaucelm of Roche-de-Frêne. To the extent of three castles with their villages Gaucelm was his liege lord. Now, as he came beneath the platform and immediately opposite that prince, he gave ceremonious recognition of the fact. Turning in his saddle, he drew his sword an inch from its sheath, holding the pommel toward the prince, then let it slip home again. Gaucelm the Fortunate made a sign of acceptance. The superb cavalcade passed on and in another moment was met by the welcoming seneschal.

It seemed that Montmaure would not joust, though several of his knights wished no better hour's play. It was explained that he was travelling to Montferrat, proceeding on a visit to the marquis his kinsman. Last night he had slept with such a baron. To-day, servitors and sumpter-mules had gone on, but the count with his immediate following would halt at Roche-de-Frêne to enquire after the health and well-being of Prince Gaucelm.

With ceremony Montmaure was marshalled to the gallery, and, mounting the steps, came between the wreathed posts to the seats of state. The prince with Alazais rose to greet him. In Gaucelm of the Star's time there had been trouble between Montmaure and

Roche-de-Frêne. Some harrying had taken place, the blood of a number of knights and men-at-arms been shed, a few hundred peasants slain. But this present Gaucelm was a man of peace, and had effected peace with Montmaure. But Roche-de-Frêne was sceptical of its lasting forever. Who knew Montmaure, knew an ambitious, grasping, warring lord — and a cruel and unscrupulous.

He was a tall man, broad-shouldered, long-armed, with red-gold hair and beard. When all courtesies of speech had been exchanged, when he had saluted in courtly fashion the most beautiful Alazais and the Princess Audiart, he took the chair of worth that was placed for him, and made enquiry for the duke. He had heard last night that he was a visitor at Roche-de-Frêne. Told that he would joust, and his pavilion pointed out. Montmaure gazed at it for half a minute, then, just turning his head, transferred his glance to the Princess Audiart. It was but an instant that he looked, then came square again to the regard of the lists. He turned a great emerald ring that he wore.

"Fair lord," said Alazais, "your son, Count Jaufre, is not with you?"

Montmaure bent his red-gold head toward her. "Peerless lady, my son, in hunting, came upon a young wolf who tore his side. He cannot ride yet with ease. I have left him at Montmaure. There he studies chivalry, and makes, I doubt not, chansons for princesses."

"Travellers from Italy," said Alazais, "have told us that he is an accomplished knight."

"It becomes not his father to boast of him," said Montmaure. "I will say though that Italy is the poorer since his return home and his own land is the richer. I would that he were tilting to-day in the light, princesses, of your four fair eyes!"

Again he looked at the Princess Audiart, and at the duke's pavilion, and turned his emerald ring.

The jousting began. Trumpets blew — two knights advanced against each other with levelled spears — round and round the green arena the eager folk craned necks. They had shows not a few in their lives, but this was a show that never palled. Cock-fights were good — baiting of bears was good — a bull-fight passed the first two — but the tourney was the prime spectacle by just as much as knights in armour outvalued beasts of wood and field. The knights met with an iron clamour, each breaking his lance against the other's shield. Another two were encountering — one of these was unhorsed. Others rode forth, coming from either end of the lists. . . .

Encounter followed encounter as knight after knight took part. Now there were single combats and now mêlées. The dust rose in clouds, the trumpets brayed, the sun climbed high. Knights were unhorsed, a number had hurts, two or three had been dragged senseless to the barrier. Stephen the Marshal was the champion; all who came against him broke at last like waves against a rock.

It was high noon and the duke had not yet jousted. The crowd was excited and began to murmur. It did not wish to be cheated — the greater he that jousted, the greater the show! Moreover it wished to be able to tell the points of him who might be going to wed Roche-de-Frêne. A statement had spread that the duke was a bold knight in a tourney — that he had an enchanted lance, a thread from Saint Martha's wimple being tied around its head — that his black stallion had been brought from the land over the sea, and had been sired by a demon steed. The crowd wanted to see him joust against Stephen the Marshal. His honour would not allow him to strike a lesser shield. But then the prince would not wish Stephen to unhorse his guest. But perhaps Lord Stephen could not — the duke might be the bolder knight. But was the duke going to tilt?

He was going to tilt. He came forth from his orange silk pavilion, in a hauberk covered with rings of steel, and his esquires helped him to mount the black stallion. He took and shook his lance; the sun made the sheath of his sword to flash; they gave him a heart-shaped shield. All around the lists sprang a rustling, buzzing, and clamour. The gallery of state rustled, whispered.

"He is not a large man," quoth Montmaure.

"I have heard that he jousts well," Prince Gaucelm answered.

"My Lord Stephen the Marshal outmatches him."

"The marshal is a passing good knight. But he is wearied."

"Ha!" thought Montmaure, "you are so courteous that you mean the duke to win the wreath. Crown your daughter Queen of Love and Beauty? God's teeth! I suppose he must do it if he wants Roche-de-Frêne —"

The black stallion and his rider crossed to the marshal's pavilion. The duke touched the shield with his lance, then backed the stallion to his own end of the meadow. Stephen the Marshal mounted his big grey and took a lance from his esquire. The field was left clear for the two.

They met midway, in dust-cloud and clangour. Whether the marshal was tired, or whether he was as courteous as his lord, or whether the duke was truly great in the tourney, may be left to choice. Each lance splintered, but Stephen the Marshal, as his horse came back upon its haunches, lost his seat, recovered it only by clutching at the mane and swinging himself into the saddle. Every herald at once found voice — up hurried the marshals — silver trumpets told to the four quarters, name and titles of the victor.

Around and around rose applause, though indeed no immoderate storm of sound. Stephen the Marshal was a valiant man. But there was enough to let one say that nothing lacked. The duke turned his horse from side to side, just bowed his head in its pointed helmet. Then, as the custom was, a wreath

of silken flowers and leaves was placed upon the point of his spear. He made the stallion to curvet and caracole, and then to pace slowly around the lists. A body of jongleurs began to play with enthusiasm as passionate a love-air as they knew. All Roche-de-Frêne, town and castle — all the barons and ladies from afar — all the knights who jousted — all watched to see the duke lay the wreath at the feet of the young princess — watched to see if he would lay it there. If he did it might be said to announce that here, if he might, he would wed.

The duke rode around the lists; then before the wide platform of state and the centre of that platform, before the chairs set arow upon a rich Eastern rug and canopied with silk, he checked the black stallion, and, lowering his lance, let the wreath slip from it and rest at the feet of certainly the most beautiful woman there, Gaucelm's princess, the dazzling Alazais.

CHAPTER IX

GARIN SEEKS HIS FORTUNE

One day, from sunrise to sunset, Garin kept company with the train of the Abbot of Saint Pamphilius. As the day dropped toward eve the road touched a stream that, reflecting the western sky, blushed like a piece of coral. It was the monks' home stream. The ford passed, their abbey would ere long rise before them. Some were tired of travel and had been homesick for garden and refectory, cell and chapel — homesick as a dog for its master, a child for its mother, a plant for its sunshine. Some were not tired of travel and were not homesick. So there were both glad and sorry in the fellowship that, midway of the ford, checked the fat abbey mules and horses to let them drink. The beasts stooped their necks to the pink water; monks and lay brothers and abbey knaves looked at the opposite slope. When they reached its crest they would see before them Saint Pamphilius, grey and rich. The abbot's mule drank first as was proper, raised its head first, and with a breath of satisfaction splashed forward. The two monks immediately attendant upon the Reverend Father must pull up their horses' heads before they had half drunken and follow their superior.

The abbot, mounting the gently shelving bank, looked at his sons in God, yet dotting the small bright river. He just checked his mule. "That limping youth is no longer in our company."

The monk nearest him spoke. "Reverend Father, as we came through the wood a mile back, he gave Brother Anselm thanks, then slipped from behind him. Brother Bartholomew called to him, but he went away among the trees."

"Ah!" said the abbot; "in which direction?"

"Reverend Father, southwardly."

Abbot Arnaut sat silent a moment, then shook the reins and his mule climbed on toward the hill-top. "Ah," he said to himself, and he said it piously. "He is young, and when you are young perils do not imperil! When you are young, you are an eel to slip through — I have done what I could! Doubtless he will escape."

That night there rose a great round moon. It lighted Garin through the wood until he was ready to sleep, — it showed him where he could find the thickest bed and covering of leaves, — and when he waked in the night he saw it like a shield overhead. All day, riding behind Brother Anselm, the monks about him, black as crows, he had felt dull and dead. Waking now in the night, forest around him and moon above, sheer unfamiliarity and wonder at his plight made him shiver and start like a lost child. All that he had lost passed before him. Foulque passed, transfigured in his eyes, he was so lonely

and sick for home. Raimbaut the Six-fingered passed, transfigured. The rude hall in Raimbaut's keep, the smoky fire and the lounging men — they were desirable to him; he felt a cold pang when it crossed him that he would never win back. He strove to plunge, head to heel, into the rich depths of the feeling before this feeling, to recall the glow out of which he had spoken at Castel-Noir, to go back to the nightingale's singing. It was there, that feeling; he knew that it had been born and was living. But to-night half a chill and empty world was between him and it. There in the forest, beneath the round moon, he had a bewildered brain and an aching heart. Then at last he crossed the half-world to some faint sweetness, and so slept.

With the dawn he was afoot. He had a piece of bread in his pouch, and as he walked he ate this, and a streamlet gave him drink. The wood thinned. In the first brightness of the day he came upon a road of so fair a width and goodness that he saw it must be a highway and beaded with towns. Apparently it ran northeast and southwest, though so broken was the country that at short range it rounded almost any corner you might choose. Where he was going he did not know, but he took the trend that led him south by west. Dimly he thought of making his way into Spain. Barcelona — there was a great town — and King Alfonso of Aragon was known for a gallant king, rich, liberal and courtly. Garin looked down at his serf's tunic and torn shoon

— but then he felt within his breast. Foulque's purse was there.

When he waked, it had been first to bewilderment and then to mere relief in warmth and sunlight. Now as he walked courage returned, the new energy and glow. Early as it was, the road had its travel which increased with the strengthening day. It was a country rich in beauty. He had never been so far from home. The people upon the road were like people he had seen before. Yet there existed small, regional differences, and his eye was quick at noting these. They pleased him; imagination played. The morning was fair without and within.

A driver of mules — twenty with twenty loads of sawn wood and sacks of salt and other matters — caught up with him. Garin and he walked side by side and the former learned whence the road came and where it went. As for the world hereabouts, it belonged to Count Raymond of Toulouse. Garin, walking, began to sing.

"You sing well, brother," said the muleteer. "If you dwelt with animals as I do, your voice would crack! They do not understand me when I sing. They think that I mean that they may stand still and admire. — Ha! May God forget and the devil remember you there! Get up!"

They travelled with pauses, jerks, and starts, so at last Garin said, "Farewell, brother!" and swung on alone. Half an hour later he, in turn, came up with a pedlar, a great pack wrapt in cloth on his

back, sitting resting by the wayside. "Who'll buy?" called the pedlar. "Here's your fine pennyworths!"

Garin stopped beside him and considered the pack. Travelling merchants of a different grade, going with laden horses from fair to fair, might have with them, cut, fashioned and sewed, a dress that would do for an esquire. But not a poor pack-aback like this. He shook his head.

"No money?" asked the pedlar. "Thumb of Lazarus! how this sickness spreads!"

Other wayfarers came in sight. "Who'll buy?" called the pedlar. "Here's your fine pennyworths!"

Garin left him chaffering with a rich villein, and went his own way along the sunny road.

Toward noon, rounding a hill, he came upon a little village. He bought from the nearest house bread and cheese and a cup of goat's milk, and sat down under a mulberry tree to eat and drink. As he made an end of the feast, two girls came and stood in the house door. They studied his appearance, and it seemed to find favour. He smiled back at them.

"Where do you live?" asked one.

"In the moon."

"Ha!" said the girl. "It was as round as an egg last night. You must have dropped out. And where are you going?"

"To the sun."

"Hè! You will be sunburned. Whose man are you?"

"Lord Love's."

The girls laughed for joy in him. "Hè! We see his collar around your neck! What does he make you do?"

"He makes me to serve a lady."

"'Ladies!' We do not like 'ladies'! They are as proud as they were made of sugar!"

"In the court of Lord Love," said Garin, "every woman mounts into a lady."

One of the girls laughed more silently than the other. "Oh, the pleasant fool!" she said. "You go on a long pilgrimage when you go to Compostella. But to that court would be the longest I have ever heard tell of!"

The other dug her bare foot into the ground. "If you are in no hurry, the house can give you work to do, and for it supper and lodging."

"I have to reach the sun. And who would do that," said Garin, "must be travelling."

He stood up, left the mulberry tree, and because they were young and not unfair, and there was to be seen in it no harm or displeasure, he kissed them both. They laughed and pushed him away, then, their hands on his shoulders, each kissed back.

Leaving them and the hamlet behind, he came again into fair country where the blue sky touched the hill-tops. Morning had slipped into afternoon. Not far away would be a town he had heard of. He meant to get there a different dress. It was necessary to do that. Wandering so, in this serf's wear,

he might at any hour be taken up, called to account, made to name his master. "Lord Love" would not answer far. Say that, without fathomless trouble, he got the dress, what was going to follow upon the getting? He did not know.

Ahead of him walked a thin figure wrapped in a black mantle and wearing a wide hat somewhat like a palmer's. Garin lessened the distance between them. The black-clad one was talking, or more correctly, chanting to himself as he walked, and that with such abstraction from the surrounding world that he did not hear the other moving close behind him. Garin listened before speaking.

"In Ethiopia is found basilisk, cockatrice, and phœnix; in certain parts of Greece the centaur, and in the surrounding seas mermaiden. The dolphin is of all beasts the tenderest-hearted. Elephants worship the sun. . . . Pliny tells us that there are eleven kinds of lightning. Clap your hands when it lightens. . . . The elements are four — earth, air, fire and water. To each of these pertaineth a spirit — gnome, sylph, salamander, ondine. By long and great study a scholar at last may perceive sylph or salamander. Such an one rises to strange wisdom. . . . The earth is not a plain as we were taught. Impossible for our human mind to conceive how it may be round, and yet the most learned hold that it is so. Holy Church denieth, *in toto*, the Antipodes, and one must walk warily. Yet, if it is fancied a square, there are difficulties. Aristotle —"

Garin came even with him. "God save you, sir!"

The black mantle started violently, returned the salutation, but looked around him nervously. Then, seeing in a neighbouring field half a dozen peasants, men and women, he recovered his equanimity. Moreover, when he looked at him closely, the youth had not the face of a robber. He addressed Garin in a slightly sing-song voice. "Do you know this road? How far is it to the town?"

"I do not know the road. It is not much further, I think."

The man in the black mantle was a thin, pale, ascetic-looking person. He had a hungry look, or what, at first, Garin thought was such. The esquire had seen hungry men, peasants starved and wolfish, prisoners with a like aspect, fasting penitents. But it was the man's eyes, Garin decided, that gave him the look, and it was not one of hunger for bread. They were large and clear, and they seemed to seek something afar.

Their owner at first looked askance and with a somewhat peevish pride at the peasant keeping beside him. Garin had forgotten his garb and the station it assigned him. But the feeling, such as it was, seemed to drift out of the black-clad's mind. "I grow weary," he said, "and shall be glad to beg a night's shelter."

"Have you travelled far?"

"From Bologna."

"Bologna! That is in Italy."

"Yes. The University there. I am going to Paris. It may be that I shall go to Oxford."

"Ah," said Garin, with respect. "I understand now why you were talking to yourself. You are a student."

"That am I. One day I may be Magister or Doctor." He walked with a lifted gaze. "I serve toward that — and toward the gaining of Knowledge."

Garin was silent; then he said with some wistfulness, "I, too, would have learning and knowledge."

The other walked with a rapt gaze. "It is the true goddess," he said, "it is the Great Love."

But Garin dissented from that with a shake of the head and a short laugh of rapture.

The student turned his large eyes upon him. "You love a woman. — What is her name?"

"I do not know," said Garin. "Nor the features of her face, nor where she lives." Suddenly as he moved, he made a name. "The Fair Goal," he said, "I have named her now."

The interest of the man in black had been but momentary. "Study is a harsh mistress," he said; "fair, but terrible! It would irk any pitying saint to see how we students fare! Hunger and cold and nakedness. Books, without warmth or cheer or light where we can con them. And we often want books and nowhere can procure them. We live in booths or in corners of other men's dwellings, and none care to give us livelihood while we master knowledge. There were several thousand of us in

Bologna, and in Paris there are more, and at Oxford they say there are many thousands. I have seen us go blind, and I have seen us die of hunger, and I have seen us unwitted —"

"But you go on," said Garin.

"It is the only life," answered the black mantle.

They walked in silence. After a few moments a thought seemed to occur to the journeyer from Bologna. He looked more closely at his companion. "By your dress you are out of the fields. But your tongue speaks castle-wise."

Garin had his vanity of revealment. "My tongue is my own, but this dress is not," he said; then, repenting his rashness, "Do not betray me! I am fleeing from trouble."

"No, I will not," answered the student with simplicity. "I know trouble, and he is hard to escape. You are, perchance, a young knight?"

"I was my lord's esquire. But it is my meaning to become a knight. — I would make poems, too."

"Ah!" said the student, "a troubadour."

Garin made no answer, but the word sank in. He had a singing heart to-day. You could be knight and troubadour both. He wished now to write a beautiful song for the Fair Goal.

They came in sight of the town. It was fairly large, massed, like most towns, about a castle. As in all towns, you saw churches and churches rising above the huddled houses.

"I will find," said the student, "some house of

monks. I will give them all the news I know, and they will give me food and a pallet. Best come with me."

But Garin would not try the monastery.

The afternoon was waning. They entered the town not more than an hour before the gates would shut, and parted in the shadow of the wall. When Garin had gone twenty paces, he looked back. The student was standing where he had left him, in a brown study, but now he spoke across the uneven, unpaved way. "Choose knowledge!" he said.

Garin, going on through a narrow, dark, and tortuous lane, found in his mind the jongleur to whom he had talked on the road from Roche-de-Frêne. "Choose love!" had said the jongleur. Garin laughed. "I choose what I must!" The dark way seemed to blossom with roses; jewels and perfumes were in his hands.

He found, after an hour of wandering and enquiry, lodging in a high, old, ruinous house above a black alley. Here he got a Spartan supper, and went to bed, tired but hopeful. Morning seemed to come at once. He rose in a high, clear dawn, ate what they gave him, sallied forth, and in the first sunshine came to a shop where was standing a Jew merchant in a high cap. Garin bought shirt, hose and breeches, tunic and mantle, shoes and cap. The Jew looked questions out of his small, twinkling black eyes, but asked none with his tongue.

Back to his lodging went Garin, his purchases

under his arm, shifted from serf's garb into these, and stood forth in russet and blue—a squire again to the eye, though not the squire of any knight or lord of wealth. He counted over the moneys yet in his purse, and then, having paid to a half-blind old woman the price of his lodging, went forth again, and at a place for weapons bought a dagger with sheath and belt. Near the weapon shop was a church porch. Garin wished to think things out a little, so he went across to this and took his seat upon the steps in the sunshine, his back to a pillar.

CHAPTER X

GARIN TAKES THE CROSS

THE bells of a neighbouring religious house were ringing with a mellow sound. People passed this way and that before the church porch. The doors were opened, and one and another entered the building. Garin paid them no attention; he sat sunk in thought. What now? What next?

He was twenty years old — strong, of a sound body, not without education in matters that the time thought needful. He could do what another esquire of gentle blood could do. Moreover, he felt in himself further powers. He was not crassly confident; he turned toward those bright shoots and buds an inner regard half shy and wistful. He was capable of longing and melancholy. . . . Danger from Savaric of Montmaure and his son Jaufre he held to be fairly passed. Accident might renew it, to-day, to-morrow, or ten years hence, but accident only took its chance with other chances. He was out of Savaric's grasp, being out of his territory and into that of Toulouse, with intention to wander yet farther afield. Extradition and detectives had their rough-hewn equivalents in Garin's day. But he was assured that there was no spy upon his track, and he did not brood over the possibility of a summons

to Toulouse to deliver him or be warred against. He had his share of common sense. He was an offender too obscure and slight for such weightiness of persecution. Did they find him, they would wring his neck, but they would not dislocate their usual life to find him. He thought that, with common precaution, he was at present safe enough from Montmaure. He could not go back to Raimbaut or to Castel-Noir — perhaps not for many years . . . though if he became a famous knight he might ride back, his esquires behind him, and challenge that false knight, Jaufre de Montmaure! To become that knight — that was his problem, or rather, one great problem. He must change his name, he must seek a lord, he must win back, first, to squirehood. On the road yesterday, one had asked him his name. He had replied with the first thing that came into his head. "Garin Rogier," he had said. He thought now that this would still answer. For his country, he proposed to say that he was of Limousin.

It might take years to become a knight. His own merit would have to do with that, but Fortune, also, would have to do with it. He knew not if Fortune would be kind to him, or the reverse. He sat bent forward, his hands clasped between his knees, his eyes upon the sunshine-gilded stones. Find knighthood — And how should he find his lady?

He took into his hand a corner of his mantle. The stuff was simple, far from costly, but the colour was

that blue, deep but not harsh, dark but silvery too, which had been worn by that form in the stone chair beneath the cedar tree, by the Convent of Our Lady in Egypt. He had bought it because it was of that hue. Now the sunshine at his feet seemed of the very tissue of that day. He sat in a dream, his mind now a floating mist of colour and fragrance, now an aching vision of a woman's form whose face he could not see. He drew and coloured the face, now this way and now that, but never to his satisfaction. . . . Would ever he meet her face to face? He knew not. Where did she live? He knew not. East, west, north, south — beyond the mountains or across the sea? He knew not. It would be in some court. There were many courts. His strong fancy was that she had come from far away. He knew not if in this world he would again enter her presence.

An exaltation came upon Garin. And if he did not, still could he uphold to the stars that dreamy passion! Still could he serve, worship, sing! The Fair Goal — the Fair Goal! Music seemed to possess him and a loveliness of words, and of rich and lofty images. The Fair Goal — the Fair Goal! Garin stretched forth his arms. "O Love, my wingèd Lord! Let me never swerve from the love of that lady!"

From the church behind him came a drift of music and chanting. A woman, mounting the steps, caught his words and paused to look at him. She was between youth and age, with a pale, ecstatic

face. "Now all the violets bloom," she said, "and the leaves shiver on the trees as the flowers come up between them! But earthly spring, fair brother, is but a fourth part of Time, and in Eternity a grain, a wind-blown petal! Choose thou Religion and find her the true love!"

She passed into the church. Garin, rising from the steps, looked about him. While he sat there the space around had become peopled. Many folk were entering the doors. As he looked, there turned a corner eight or ten men walking in procession, behind and about them a throng. All mounted the steps, pressing toward the entrance. The most had pale faces of enthusiasm. Of the crowd some were weeping, some uttering exclamations of praise and ecstasy. Garin touched a bystander on the sleeve. "What takes place?"

"Do you not see the crosses?"

"I could not for the crowd," said Garin. "I can now. They are going to the land over sea?"

"Three ships with their companies sail from the nearest port. All the churches are singing mass and sewing crosses on those who will take them."

"But there is no great and general going preached to-day," said Garin. "There has not been since Saint Bernard's time."

"They say it will soon be preached again," answered his informant. "Holy church must find a way to set off heresy that is creeping in! — These are ships sailing with help for King Baldwin of

Jerusalem. The Pope has granted a great Indulgence, and many from these parts are going that they may wipe out their sins."

The informant moved toward the doors. Garin thought of entering and hearing mass and seeing the crosses sewed on. But then he thought that it would be wiser to keep his road. He waited until most of the people had gone into the church, then found his way to the westward-giving town gate and passed out into the country. In Foulque's purse he had still enough to purchase — not another Paladin, as he recognized with a sigh, but yet some horse not wholly unworthy. But this town, he had been told, had no good horse-market. Such and such a place, some miles away, was better. So he walked in his russet and blue and suited so the russet, sunshiny country and the profound blue arch of the sky.

Upon a lonely stretch of the road he came to a wayside cross, with a gaunt figure carved upon it. A gaunt figure, too, sat beside the cross, but rose as he approached and tinkled a small bell that it carried. As he lifted his mantle and went by with averted face so that he might not breathe the air that flowed between, it croaked out a demand for alms. It came so foully across Garin's dream that he shook his head and hurried by. But when an eighth of a mile was between him and the leper he stood still, his eyes upon the ground. At last, drawing out Foulque's purse, he took from it a coin and

going back dropped it into the leper's cup. "In Love's name!" he said.

The leper widened his lips. "What is Love's name?" he asked. "If I had its name, I might make it do something!"

Garin left him by the wayside cross, a terrible, unhelped person. He darkened his mood for him, or the stress and strain and elevation of the past week, flagging, left him suddenly in some dead backwater or black pool of being. He walked on, putting the miles behind him, but with no springing step and with a blank gaze. Light and colour seemed to withdraw from the day and the landscape. The cross-taking in the town behind him and the leper by the roadside conjoined with many another fact, attitude, and tendency of his world. It could show itself a gusty world of passion and energy, and also a world of asceticisms, humilities and glooms, of winter days struggling with spring days, of an inward fall toward lessening and annihilation. Here was an hour impetuous and crescive, and here was its successor passive, resigned and fading, and one man or woman might experience both. Garin had been aloft; now he walked in a vale indeed, and could have laid himself upon its ashy soil and wept.

Out of that mood he passed into one less drear. But he was still sad, and the whole huge world came into correspondence. Lepers and outcast persons, prisoners, and slaves, the poor and hopeless, the

lovers parted, the condemned for sin — Garin plodded on, his eyes upon the earth.

A sound of distant bells aroused him. He lifted his head and looked to see whence it came. At the base of an olive-planted hill appeared a monastery, not large, but a simple-seeming, antique place. It had a church, small too, with a bell-tower. The country hereabouts was rich with woods and streams and purple crags, in the distance a curtain of great mountains. Before him, two miles or so away, Garin saw a castle crowning a cliff rising from a narrow valley. It, neither, was large — though larger than Raimbaut's castle. . . . The bells were ringing sweetly, the light bathed the little vale and washed the crag and the castle walls. Garin's sadness fell, in part, from him. What stayed only gave depth and charm to all that in that moment met his senses. In him phantasy turned quickly, acted quickly. "I like all this," it said in effect. "And I tell myself that in the baron who dwells in that castle I shall find a lord who will knight me!"

He resolved to go to the castle. He walked quickly now, with a determined, light step. A spur of the road led off to the church where the bells were yet ringing. Between the town he had quitted and this spot he had met few people upon the way. Nor were there any here, where the two roads joined. It lay a wide, clean, sunny space. But as he continued upon the highway the emptiness of the world began to change. Folk appeared, singly or in groups,

and all were going toward the ringing bells. Passing an old man, he asked, "What is the mass for?" and was answered, "They are going over sea."

A young man, an artisan with a bag of tools in his hand, approached. Garin stopped him. "What lord lives in yonder castle?"

"Sir Eudes de Panemonde," said the artisan. "He has taken the cross and is going to the land over sea."

Garin stood still, staring at him, then drew his breath, and with a jerk of the head went on by. "The land over sea!" said Garin. "The land over sea!"

There was a calvary built by the roadside. Men and women knelt before it, then rising, hurried on toward the church. Close by, on a great stone, sat a cowled monk, stationed there, it would seem, to give information or counsel. Garin, coming up, gave and received salutation.

"Are you for the cross, fair son?" demanded the monk. "You would give a lusty blow to the infidel! Take it, and win pardon for even the sins you dream of!"

"Why, brother," asked Garin, "does Sir Eudes de Panemonde go?"

"Long years ago," answered the monk, "when he was a young man, Sir Eudes committed a great sin. He has done penance, as this monastery knows, that receives his gifts! But now he would further cleanse his soul."

"He is not then young nor of middle-age?"

"He is three-score," said the monk.

Another claimed his attention. Garin moved away, kept on upon the road. None now was going his way, all were coming from the direction of the castle. There must be a little bourg beyond, hidden by some arm of earth, purple-sleeved. He thought that he saw in the distance, descending a hill, a procession. Under a lime tree by the road sat an old cripple decently clad, and with a grandson and granddaughter to care for him. Garin again stayed his steps. "What manner of knight, father, is Sir Eudes de Panemonde?"

The light being strong, the cripple looked from under his hand at the questioner. "Such a knight," he said, in an old man-at-arms voice, "as a blue-and-tawny young sir-on-foot might be happy to hold stirrup for!"

"I mean," said Garin, "is he noble of heart?"

But the old man was straining his eyes castleward. The grandson spoke. "He is a good lord — Sir Eudes! Sir Aimar may be a better yet."

The procession was seen more plainly. "They are coming, grandfather!" cried the girl. "Sir Eudes and Sir Aimar will be in front, and the men they take with them. Then the people from the castle and Panemonde following —"

"Yea, yea!" said the old cripple. "I have seen before to-day folk go over seas to save the Holy Sepulchre and spare themselves hell pains! They

mean to come back — they mean to come back. But a-many never come, and we hear no tales of what they did."

The grandson took the word. "Jean the Smith says that from the castle Sir Eudes walks barefoot and in his shirt to the church. That's because of his old sin! Then, when all that go have heard mass and have communed, he will dress and arm himself within the monastery, all needful things having been sent there, and his horse as well. Then all that go will journey on to the port."

Garin spoke to the girl. "Who is Sir Aimar?"

"He is Sir Eudes's son." She turned upon him a lighted face. "He is a brave and beautiful knight!"

"Is he going to the land over sea?"

"Yes."

A hundred and more people were coming toward the lime tree, the calvary beyond it, the church and monastery beyond the calvary. Dust rose from the road and that and the distance obscured detail. There seemed to be horsemen, but many on foot. All the people strung along the road now turned their heads that way. There ran a murmur of voices. But Garin stood in silence beneath the lime tree, from which were falling pale yellow leaves. He stood in a waking dream. Instead of Languedoc he saw Palestine — a Palestine of the imagination. He had listened to palmers' tales, to descriptions given by preaching monks. Once a knight-templar had stayed two days with Raimbaut the Six-fingered,

and the castle had hearkened, open-mouthed. So Garin had material. He saw a strange, fair land, and the Christian kingdoms and counties planted there; saw them as they were not or rarely were, or only might be; saw them dipped in glamour, saw them as a poet would, as that Prince Rudel did who took ship and went to find the Lady of Tripoli — and went to find the Lady of Tripoli. . . .

The procession from the castle and the village beyond coming nearer, its component parts might clearly be discerned. In front walked two figures, and now it could be seen that they were both in white.

"Ah, ah!" cried the girl beside the old man; and there were tears in her voice. "Sir Aimar that did not do the sin, goes like Sir Eudes —"

The cripple would be lifted to his feet and held so. Grandson and daughter put hands beneath his arms and raised him. "So — so!" he said querulously. "And why should n't the son go like a penitent if the father does? That 's only respect! But the young don't respect us any longer —"

The procession came close. There rode twenty horsemen, of whom three or four wore knights' spurs, and the others were mounted men-at-arms and esquires. All wore, stitched upon the mantle, or the sleeve, or the breast of the tunic, crosses of white cloth. Behind these men came others, mounted, but without crosses or the appearance of travellers. They seemed neighbours to the lord of Panemonde, men of

feudal rank, kinsmen and allies. Several might hold their land from him. There might be present his bailiff and also the knight or baron who had promised to care for Panemonde as though it were his own fief. In the rear of the train came the foot-people, castle retainers and servants, villagers, peasants, men, women and children, following their lord from Panemonde through the first stage of his travel over sea. Throughout the moving assemblage now there was solemn silence and now bursts of pious ejaculation, utterances of enthusiasm, adjurations to God, the Virgin and the Saints. Or, more poignant yet, there were raised chants of pilgrimage. When this was done the people along the roadside joined their voices. Moreover there were men and women who wept, and there were those who fell into ecstasy. Of all things in the world, in this age, emotion was the nearest at hand.

Garin felt the infecting wave. At the head of the train, dismounted, barefoot, wearing each a white garment that reached halfway between knee and ankle, bare-headed, moving a few paces before their own mounted knights, appeared the lords of Panemonde, father and son. Sir Eudes was white-headed, white-bearded, finely-featured, tall and lean. His son, Sir Aimar, seemed not older — or but little older — than Garin's self, and what the girl had said appeared the truth.

The two came close to the lime tree. Garin, dropping his mantle, stepped into the road and fell upon

both knees, suppliant-wise. "Lord of Panemonde," he cried, "let me go with you to the land over the sea!"

Sir Eudes and his son stood still, and behind them the riders checked their horses.

"What is your name, youth?" asked the first, "And whence do you come?"

"Garin Rogier," answered Garin, "and from Limousin. I was a younger brother, and have set out to seek my fortune. Of your grace, Lord of Panemonde, place me among your men!"

Sir Eudes regarded him shrewdly. "I make my guess that you are a runaway from trouble."

"If I am," said Garin, "it is no trouble that will touch your honour if you take me! I fought, with good reason, one that was more powerful than I."

The other made to shake his head and go on by. But Garin spread out his arms that he might not pass and still cried, "Take me with you, Lord of Panemonde! I have vowed to go with you across the sea, and so to serve you that you will make me a knight!"

The two gazed at him, and those behind them gazed. He kneeled, so resolved, so energized, so seeing the fate he had chosen, that as at Castel-Noir, so now, the glow within came in some fashion through the material man. From his blue-grey eyes light seemed to dart, his hair, between gold and brown, became a fine web holding light, his flesh seemed to bloom. His field of force, expanding, touched them.

"In the name of the Mother of God!" cried Garin; but what the man within meant was, "Because I will it, O Lord of Panemonde!"

The people on foot, too far in the rear to see more than that there was a momentary halting of the train, began a louder singing.

"Jerusalem!
Shall the paynim hold thee,
Jerusalem?
And shame our Lord Jesus,
Jerusalem?
And shame our blessed Lady, his meek Mother,
Jerusalem?
So that they say, 'Why come not the men
To slay Mahound and cleanse our holy places?
Where are the knights, the sergeants and the footmen?'
Jerusalem!
Who takes the cross and wendeth over seas,
Jerusalem!
Will save his soul thereby, raze out his sins,
Jerusalem!"

Sir Eudes de Panemonde stared at the kneeling figure. But the young knight beside him who had stood in silence, his eyes upon the suppliant, now spoke. "Let him go with us, father! Give him to me for esquire. — There is that that draws between us."

The father, who had a great affection for his son, looked from him to Garin and back again. "He is a youth well-looking and strong," he said. "Perhaps he may do thee good service!"

The chant, renewed, and taken up from the roadside, came to his ear. He crossed himself.

"Nor may I deny to our Lord Jesus one servant who will strike down the infidel! Nor to the youth himself the chance to win forgiveness of sins!" He spoke to Garin. "Stand up, Garin Rogier! Have you a horse?"

Garin rose to his feet. "No, lord. But I have money sufficient to buy one."

Sir Aimar spoke again. "Pierre Avalon will sell him one when we come to the monastery."

The father nodded. "Have you confessed and received absolution?"

"One week ago, lord. But when we come to the church I will find a priest. And when I am shriven I will take the cross."

"Then," said Sir Eudes, "it is agreed, Garin Rogier. You are my man and my son's man. As for becoming knight, let us first see what blows you deal and what measure you keep! Now delay us no longer."

He put himself into motion, and his son walked beside him. The mounted men followed, their horses stepping slowly. Then came the stream afoot, and Garin joined himself to this.

> *"Who takes the cross and wendeth over seas,*
> *Jerusalem!*
> *Will save his soul thereby, raze out his sins,*
> *Jerusalem!"*

Here was the calvary again, and the monk sitting beside it — here was the church, jutting out from the monastery — and people about it, and priests and

monks — and a loud and deep chanting — and a mounting sea of emotion. Many broke into cries, some, phrensied, fell to the earth, crying that they had a vision.

"To slay Mahound, and cleanse our sacred places!"

The mass was sung, the sacrament given those who were going to the land over sea. Garin found his priest and was shriven, then knelt with the esquires and men-at-arms and with them took the Body. Upon his breast was sewn a white cross. He had, with all who went, the indulgence. He was delivered from all the sins that through his life, until that day, he had committed.

The mass was sung. A splinter of St. Andrew's cross — the church's great possession — was venerated. The two de Panemondes, rising from their knees, passed from the church to the monastery, and here, in the prior's room, their kinsmen and peers about them, they were clothed as knights again. Without, in a grey square, shaded by old trees, Garin purchased a horse from Pierre Avalon.

Sir Eudes and his son came forth in hauberk and helm. The knights for the ships and the land over the sea mounted, their followers mounted. Farewells were said. Those who were going drew into ranks. A priest blessed them. The people wept and cried out blessings. The monks raised a Latin chant. The sky was sapphire, a light wind carried to and fro the autumn leaves. Sir Eudes de Panemonde

and his son touched their horses with their gilded spurs. The knights followed, the esquires and men-at-arms. Behind them the voices, at first swelling louder, sank as lengthened the road between. They pressed on, and now they lost that sound and lost the church, the monastery, and the castle of Panemonde. . . . Now the leper by the roadside was passed, still sitting beneath the cross, tinkling his bell. In the distance was seen the town that Garin had left that morning. The company did not enter it, but turned aside into a road that ran to the southward and then east and then south again. So at last, to-morrow at sunset, they would come to the port and to the ships that would bring them to Syria.

Garin rode in a dream. He thought of Raimbaut and of Foulque, of Castel-Noir and Roche-de-Frêne, but most he thought of the Fair Goal, and tried to see her, in her court he knew not where.

CHAPTER XI

THIBAUT CANTELEU

"WHO would risk never, risks ever," said the Princess Audiart, and moving her rook, checked the marshal's king.

Her cousin Guida, a blonde of much beauty, sitting watching the game, made a sound of demurral. The marshal's hand hovered over a piece.

"Do not play courtly, Lord Stephen," said the princess. "Play fairly!"

Whereupon Stephen pushed forward a different piece and, releasing his own king, put hers in jeopardy.

"Now what will you do, Audiart?" cried Guida. "You were too daring!"

"That is as may be," answered the princess, and studied the board.

In the great fireplace of the hall beechwood blazed and helped the many candles to give light. It was Lenten tide and cold enough to make the huge fire a need and a pleasure. In the summer the floor had been strewn with buds and leaves, but now there lay upon it eastern cloths with bear-skins brought from the North. There were seats of various kinds, — settles or benches, divan-like arrangements of cushions. Knights and ladies occupied these, or stood, or moved about at will. So spacious was the hall

that these and other folk of the court — pages, jongleurs, a jester with cap-and-bells, dogs, a parrot on a swinging perch, two chaplains in a corner, various clerkly and scholarly persons such as never lacked in Gaucelm's court, two or three magnificently dressed people in the train of a Venetian, half merchant, half noble, and rich as a soldan, whom Gaucelm at the moment entertained — gave no feeling of a throng. The raised or princely part of the hall, in itself a goodly space, had quiet enough for rational converse, even for sitting withdrawn into one's self, studying with eyes upon the fire matters beyond the beechwood flame.

Gaucelm the Fortunate, seated in his great, richly carved chair, talked with the Venetian. Some paces away, but yet upon the dais, Alazais held court. Between, the Princess Audiart played chess with Stephen the Marshal. The castle and town and princedom of Roche-de-Frêne and all that they held were seven years and some months older than upon that autumn day when the squire Garin had knelt in the cathedral, and ridden through the forest, and fought for a shepherdess.

The years had not made Alazais less beauteous. She sat in a low chair, robed in buttercup yellow richly embroidered and edged with fur. She held a silver ball pierced and filled with Arabian perfumes. The Venetian had given it to her, and now she raised it to her nostrils, and now she played with it with an indolent, slow, graceful movement of her white hands.

About her were knights and ladies, and in front, upon a great silken cushion placed upon the floor, sat a slender, brilliant girl with a voice of beauty and flexibility and a genius for poetic narration. The court took toll of such a talent, was taking toll now. The damosel, in a low and thrilling voice and with appropriate gesture, told a lay of Arthur's knights. Those around listened; firelight and candle-light made play; at the lower end of the hall a jongleur, trying his viol, came in at the pauses with this or that sweet strain.

At the other end of the broad, raised space Prince Gaucelm and the Venetian left talk of Venice trade, of Cyprus and Genoa, and came to status and event this side the Alps.

"Duke Richard of Aquitaine plays the rebel to his father the King of England and quarrels with his cousin the King of France and wars against his neighbour the Count of Toulouse. Count Savaric of Montmaure and his son Count Jaufre —"

The Princess Audiart won the game of chess, won fairly. "You couch a good lance and build a good house, Lord Stephen," she said. "Yesterday, it was I who was vanquished!"

Guida had moved away, joining the group about the girl on the silk cushion. Stephen the Marshal took one of the ivory chessmen in his hand and turned it from side to side. "Montmaure!" he said. "Montmaure grows more puffed with pride than mortal man should be!"

The princess nodded. "Yes. My lord count sees himself as the great fish for whom the ocean was built."

The marshal put down the chess-piece and took up another. "Have you ever seen Jaufre de Montmaure?"

"No."

"I saw him at Périgueux. He is tall and red-gold like his father, but darker in hue. He has a hawk nose, and there is a strange dagger-scar across his cheek. — What is it, my Lady Audiart?"

The princess was sitting with parted lips and with eyes that looked far away. She shivered a little, shrugging her shoulders. "Nothing! A fancy. I remembered something. But a-many men have dagger scars. — Jaufre de Montmaure! No, I think that I never saw him. Nor do I wish to see him. Let him stay with Aquitaine and be his favourite!"

"I know not how long that will last. Now they are ruthless and reckless together, and they say that any day you can see Richard's arm around his neck. But Duke Richard," said the marshal, "is much the nobler man."

The princess laughed. "You give faint praise! Jesu! If what they say of Count Jaufre be true —"

There fell a silence. Stephen the Marshal turned and turned the chess-piece. "The prince will send me presently with representations to King Philip at Paris."

"I know. It seems wise to do that."

"I will do my best," said Stephen the Marshal; and sat silent again. Then, "I will find at Paris festivals and tourneys, no doubt, and for Roche-de-Frêne's honour and my own, I must play my part in those matters also." He put down the chess-piece, and brought his hands together. "Queens and princesses may accept, in courtly wise, heart and *devoir* of true knights! My Lady Audiart! I plead again for some favour of yours that I may wear. For, as God lives, I will wear no other lady's!"

The Princess Audiart looked at him kindly, a little mockingly, a little mournfully. "Stephen — Stephen! will you be a better or a braver man, or a fitter envoy to King Philip, with my glove in your helmet? No, you will not!"

"I should be a happier man," said Stephen the Marshal.

"Then almost I wish that I might give it to you! But I cannot — I cannot!" said the princess. "I love earth, fire, air and water, the stars in heaven, the people of the earth, and the thoughts in the mind, but I love no man after the fashion that men desire! — Turn elsewhere, Lord Stephen!"

But Stephen the Marshal shook an obstinate head. "Saint Mark, my witness, I shall wear no other's favour!"

Prince Gaucelm rose, the Venetian with him, and crossed to Alazais's side. The girl of the silken cushion had ended her story. The jongleurs distant in the hall began to play viol, lute and harp. "Let us

go hearken," said the princess; and, quitting the chess-table, went to sit beside her step-dame. She had affection for Alazais, and Alazais for Audiart. Stephen the Marshal followed. All drew together to listen to sung poesy.

A favourite jongleur had come forward, harp in hand. He was a dark, wiry, eastern-appearing man, fantastically dressed in brown dashed and streaked with orange. When he had played a dreamy, rich, and murmuring air, he began to sing. He sang well, a fair song and one that was new to a court that was gracious and hospitable to songs.

"Ah, that goes," said the Princess Audiart, "like the sea in June!"

"It is like a chanson of Bernart de Ventadorn's," said Alazais, "and yet it is not like him either. Who made it, Elias?"

"It may have a sound of the sea," answered Elias, "for it came over the sea. I got it from a palmer. He had learned it at Acre, and he said that, words and music, the troubadour, Garin de l'Isle d'Or, made it there."

"Oh, we have heard of him! Knights coming back have told us — But never did we hear his singing before! Again, Elias!"

Elias sang. "It is sweet. — *The Fair Goal!*"

A day or two later, in this hall, the Princess Audiart sat beside her father upon the dais, the occasion a hearing given to the town of Roche-de-Frêne.

There was another than Roche-de-Frêne to be received and hearkened to, namely an envoy, arrived the evening before, from Savaric, Count of Montmaure. But the town came first, at the hour that had been set.

The hall presented a different scene from that of the other night. Here now were ranged the prince's officers of state, the bailiff-in-chief, executives of kinds. At the doors were ushers and likewise men-at-arms. Men of feudal rank stood starkly, right and left of the dais. Others of the castle population, men and women, who found an interest in this happening, watched from the sides of the hall or from the musicians' gallery. Below the dais sat two clerks with pens, ink, sandbox, and parchment. Before it, in the middle portion of the hall, were massed fifty of the citizens of Roche-de-Frêne.

The Princess Audiart sat in a deep chair, her arms upon its arms. She was dressed in the colour of wine, and the long plain folds of her robe and mantle rested the eye. Her throat was bare, around it a thin chain of gold and a pear-shaped ruby. The thick braids of her hair came over her gown to her knee. Between the dark waves, below a circlet of gold, showed her intent and brooding face.

Castle and town were used to seeing her there, beside her father. Years ago — when castle and town undertook to remember back — it had seemed strange, but now use and wont had done their work. She was not fair — they remembered when they had

called her "the ugly princess" — but she was wise. It was usual enough among the great of the earth for fathers to associate with them sons. Here was a prince-father who associated with him his daughter. By degrees Roche-de-Frêne had ceased to wonder. Now, for a long time, the fact had been accepted. Strangeness gone, it seemed, for this one spot on the huge earth, rational.

The town had digested that great meal of liberties obtained years ago, that and smaller loaves since given. It was hungry again; hungry now for no slight stop-gaps, but for another full and great meal. For many months it had given the castle oblique indications that it was hungry. Time was when Gaucelm, a prince not unbeloved, riding through Roche-de-Frêne, met almost wholly broad smiles and faces of welcome. That throughout a year had been changing. Roche-de-Frêne, at first unconsciously reflecting growing desires, but then more and more deliberately, now wore a face of hunger. Roche-de-Frêne saw its interest, and that another meal was to its interest. But it did not wholly expect its lord at once to see that, nor to identify his interest with their interest. It might, it believed, have to fight its lord somewhat as other towns fought theirs. Not with weapons of steel, — it would not win there, — but with persistent and mounting clamour and disaffection, and, most effectively, with making trouble as to tolls, rents, taxes, lord's rights, and supplies.

The deputation included men from every guild. Here were chief dyers in scarlet, weavers of fine cloth, makers of weapons, workers in leather, moulders of candles, and here were traders and merchants, dealers in wine and handlers of cattle. Men of substance had been chosen, master workmen and also master agitators.

The prince, addressing himself to a man of venerable aspect, a merchant whose name was known in far places, asked if he were spokesman. There ran a murmur through the deputation. It pressed forward a little, it took on an anxious face.

The merchant advanced a step and addressed the dais. "Fair, good lord and my Lady Audiart, as you both know, I am a judge of merchant's law, but have no gift of tongue. I know a cause when it is good, but God has not made me eloquent to set it forth to another man — craving pardon, my liege lord and my Lady Audiart! So I will not speak, may it please you both. But here is Thibaut Canteleu, the master of the saddlers —"

"I had expected," said Prince Gaucelm, "to hear from Thibaut Canteleu. — Stand forth, Thibaut!'

The merchant stepped back. The throng worked like a cluster of bees, then parted, and out of it came a man of thirty, square-shouldered and sturdy,with crisply curling black hair, and black, bold, and merry eyes. It was evident that he was his fellows' chosen and favourite, their predestined leader. The fifty slanted their bodies toward him, grew suddenly

encouraged and bold, hung upon what he should say. Thibaut Canteleu was magnetic, like a fire for warmth, an instiller of courage. He made a gesture of reverence toward the dais.

The prince smiled slightly. "Well, Thibaut Canteleu?"

"Sire and my Lady Audiart," spoke Thibaut, "few words suffice when here is right and yon is wisdom! Sire, these many years, back to the beginning, have we and our fathers and grandfathers before us, given to our lords duteous service. When the town was a poor village, when there were but a few huts — when the old castle stood — in the old days before the memory of man, we gave it! And this castle and the old castle — and you, lord, and the old lords — have given us succour and protection, holding your shield above us! Beau sire, we do not forget that, nor that you are our lord." As he spoke he kneeled down on both knees, joined his hands palm to palm, and made a gesture of placing them between other hands. "Sire and my Lady Audiart, many castles have you and not a few towns and all are your sworn men. Shall this town that grew up by your greatest castle and took name from it, be less your man than another? Jesu forbid! Services, dues, rents and tolls, fair-toll and market-toll, are yours, and when you summon us we drop all and come, and if there is war we hold the town for you while there is breath in us! Yea, and if there should chance to be needed in this moment moneys

for building, for gathering, clothing, and weaponing men-at-arms, for castle-wants, for pilgrimages or sending knights to the land over the sea, for founding of abbeys and buying of books and holy relics, or for any other great and especial matter, we stand ready, lord, to raise as swiftly as may be, that supply."

He came to a period in his speech, still kneeling. "That is good hearing, Thibaut Canteleu!" said Gaucelm the Fortunate. He spoke with equanimity, with his large scope of humour. He was as big as a mountain range, and as became mountains he seemed to be able to see in various directions. "Now," he said, "let us hear, Thibaut, what your lords must do!"

"Fair, good lord —"

"We are yet to guard Roche-de-Frêne from wolf-neighbour and fox-neighbour, Count Dragon and King Lion? Have you heard tell of the siege in your grandfather's time? But well I wot that the town has no enemies, that none is jealous of its trade, that no wolf thinks, 'Now if I had its market — or if I had it with its market!' and no dragon ponders, 'What if I put forth a claw and drag these weavers and dyers and saddlers where they may weave and dye and work in leather for me? When I have them in my den they may whistle not for new, but for old freedoms!' — We are yet to keep Roche-de-Frêne in as fair safety as we may?"

"Lord, lord," said Thibaut, "are we not of one

another? If you are strong to keep us safe, are we not strong to make you wealth?"

"My father gave you freedoms, and often have I heard him say that he repented his giving! Then I ruled, and for a time held to that later mind of his. Then about many matters I formed my own mind, and in larger measure than he had given, I granted freedom. For a fair space of time you rested content. Then you began to ask again. And again, now this grant and now that, I have given!"

He ceased to speak, sitting dressed in bronze samite, with a knight's belt of finest work, and on his head a circlet of gold.

Thibaut Canteleu still kneeled. Now he raised his black eyes. "Lord, why did you give?"

"Because it seemed to me right," said Prince Gaucelm.

Thibaut spread his hands. The corners of the Princess Audiart's lips twitched. She glanced aside at Gaucelm the Fortunate, and a very sweet and loving look came like a beam of light into her face. She said under her breath, "Ah, Jesu! Judgement in this matter has been given!" turned her head and retook the intent and brooding look. Her eyes, that had marked width between them, received impression from the length and breadth of the hall. She gathered each slight movement and change in the deputation of citizens; and as for Thibaut Canteleu, she saw that Thibaut, also, grasped that judgement had been given.

Prince Gaucelm sat without movement of body or change of look. His size did not give him a seeming of heaviness, nor the words that he had spoken take power from his aspect. He did not seem conscious of their effect upon others. He sat in silence, then shook himself and returned to the matter in hand. "Tell us now, Thibaut Canteleu, what it is that the town desires."

"Lord," said Canteleu, "we wish and desire to elect our own magistrates. And our disputes and offences — saving always, lord, those that are truly treasonable or that err against Holy Church — we wish and desire to bring into our own courts and before judges of our choosing."

A sharp sound ran through the hall — that portion of it that was not burgher. Truly Roche-de-Frêne was making a demand immense, portentous — The red was in the faces of the prince's bailiffs and in those of other officials. But Gaucelm the Fortunate maintained a quietness. He looked at Thibaut Canteleu as though he saw the generations behind him and the generations ahead. He spoke.

"That is what you now wish and ask?"

"Lord, that is what we wish and ask."

"And if I agree not?"

"We are your merchants and artisans, lord! What can we do? But are love and ready service naught? Fair good lord, and my Lady Audiart, we hold that we ask a just — yea, as God lives, a right-

eous thing! Moreover, we think, lord, that we plead, not to such as the Count of Montmaure, but to Roche-de-Frêne!"

Behind him spread a deep, corroboratory murmur, a swaying of bodies and nodding of heads. The winter sunshine, streaming in through long, narrow windows, made luminous the positive colours, the greens, blues, reds of apparel, the faces swarthy, rosy or pale, the workman hands and the caps held in them, the smoother merchant hands and the better caps held in them. It lighted Thibaut Canteleu, still kneeling, in a blue tunic and grey hose, a blue cap upon the pavement beside him.

The prince spoke. "Get you to your feet, Thibaut, and depart, all of you! A week from to-day, at this hour, come again, and you shall be answered."

Thibaut Canteleu took up his cap and rose from his knees. He made a deep reverence to the dais, then stepped backward. All the deputation moved backward, kept their faces toward the prince until they reached the doors out of which they passed, between the men-at-arms. The blur of red and blue and green, of faces pale or sanguine or swarthy, filtered away, disappeared. The hall became again all castle — a place of lord and lady, knight, esquire, man-at-arms, and page, a section of the world of chivalry. All around occurred a slight shifting of place, a flitting of whispers. The prince stirred, turned slightly in his great chair, and spoke in an undertone to his daughter. She answered in as low

a voice, sitting quite still, her long, slender hands resting upon the arms of her chair.

Gaucelm nodded, then spoke to the seneschal standing to the right of the dais. "Now will we hear Montmaure's envoy."

CHAPTER XII

MONTMAURE

THERE came into the hall, ushered by the seneschal and walking with Stephen the Marshal to whom had been confided his entertainment, a knight banneret, very good-looking, very sumptuously attired, with an air of confidence verging on audacity. Behind and attending him were two other knights, lesser men; behind these, three esquires. All were dressed with a richness; all, indefinably, stood in a debatable strip between friend and foe.

The envoy came before the dais. On yesterday welcome had been given him, and to-day set to hear the desires of Count Savaric of Montmaure. Now, Gaucelm being, by virtue of three castles, his lord's lord, the envoy just bent the knee, then straightened himself and stood prepared to give that forth which the count had preferred to send by word of mouth rather than by written letter. There occurred, however, some delay. A wider audience than had gathered to the town's hearing would come to hear what Savaric of Montmaure had to say. Lord and lady, knight and squire, were entering, and now came Alazais, clad in white bordered with ermine. Her lord made her welcome; the Princess Audiart, rising, stood until she was seated. Her

ladies, fair and gaily dressed, made about her a coloured cloud. Two that were Audiart's came and stood behind that princess.

At last, quiet falling, the prince once more gave to Montmaure's envoy words of welcome, then, "We should have been glad," he said, "to have greeted in friendly wise Count Savaric himself! His son, too, who is said to be a puissant knight."

"So please you, they may come some day to Roche-de-Frêne, the one and the other," answered the envoy. "But now my master, the great count, is busy at home where he makes a muster of lords who are his men. At Autafort, with Duke Richard, is the young count, Sir Jaufre, red-gold, shining and mighty, like a star of high fortune!"

"The 'great count,'" said Gaucelm, with suavity, "is well employed. And you grow a poet, Sir Guiraut of the Vale, when you speak of the young count."

"Sir," said Guiraut of the Vale, "he is poet himself and theme of poets! He is the emerald of knights, the rose of chivalry! That lady counts herself fortunate for whom he rides in tournament. His lance unhorses the best knights, and behind him, in his quarrels, are the many spears of Montmaure — I will be highly bold and say the spears, for number like the trees in the forest, of Duke Richard of Aquitaine!"

Gaucelm smiled. "Duke Richard," he said, "hath just now, I think, need of his spears before Toulouse."

Guiraut of the Vale waved his hand. "Count Raymond will come to terms, and the Duke's spears be released. But all this, sir, is not the matter of my message! Truly, when I think of Count Jaufre I forget myself in praises!"

"*Guiraut, Guiraut!*" thought the Princess Audiart. "*You forget not one word of what you have been taught to say!*"

Gaucelm the Fortunate spoke with serenity. "A servant so devoted is as a sack of gold in the count's treasury! —Now your message, sir envoy, and the matter upon which you were sent?"

Guiraut of the Vale breathed deep, lifted his chest beneath bliaut and robe of costly stuffs, made his shoulders squarer, included now in the scope of his look alike Gaucelm and his daughter.

"Prince of Roche-de-Frêne," he said, "it is to my point — though the Blessed Virgin is my witness I am not so commissioned! — to cause you and this priceless lady, the princess your daughter, to see Sir Jaufre de Montmaure as the glass of the world shows him, the brightest coal upon the hearth of chivalry! The world hears of the wisdom of the Princess Audiart — well wot I that did she see and greet him, she would value this knight aright! As for him, like his sword to his side, he would wear there this wisdom! Fair prince, my master, the great count, would see Montmaure and Roche-de-Frêne one in wedlock. Count Savaric of Montmaure offers his son, Count Jaufre, for bridegroom to the Princess Audiart!"

The great hall rustled loudly. Only the dais seemed quiet, or only the two figures immediately fronting Sir Guiraut of the Vale. Out of the throng seemed to come a whisper, electric and flowing, "Here is a suitor that would hang Roche-de-Frêne at his belt!" It lifted and deepened, the whispering and muttering. It took the tone of distant thunder.

Gaucelm the Fortunate raised his hand for quiet. When it was attained he spoke courteously to Guiraut of the Vale. "Count Savaric echoes my soul when he would have peace and friendliness and not enmity between Roche-de-Frêne and Montmaure. Certes, that may be brought about, or this way or that way! For the way that he advances, it must be considered, and that with gravity and courteousness. But, such is the plenitude of life, the same city may be reached by many roads."

"Beseeching your pardon," said Guiraut of the Vale, "that is true of many cities, but not, according to the count my master, of this one!"

The hall rustled again. The lord of Roche-de-Frêne sat quietly in his great chair, but he bent upon Montmaure's envoy a look profound and brooding. At last he spoke. "We are not to be threated, Sir Guiraut of the Vale, into a road whatsoever! Nor is this city, that is only to be reached so, of such importance, perhaps, to Roche-de-Frêne as imagineth the 'great count.'" Wherewith he ceased to deal with Guiraut and spoke aside to his daughter.

The Princess Audiart rose from her chair. She stood in long, flowing red shading from the cherry of her under-robe through the deepened crimson of the bliaut to the almost black of her mantle. At the base of her bare throat glowed on its chain of gold the pear-shaped ruby.

"To-day, Sir Guiraut of the Vale," she said, "we receive the count your master's fair proffer of his son for my bridegroom. For my part, I thank the count for his courtesy and good-will and fair words to me-ward. The prince my father consenting, one week from to-day, here in the hall, you shall have answer to bear back. Until then, the prince my father, and the princess my fair and good step-dame, and myself, who must feel the honour your master does me, and all the knights and ladies of this court give you fair welcome! An we may, we will make the days until then pass pleasantly for a knight of whose valiancy this castle is not ignorant."

She spoke without pride or feeling in her voice, simply, in the tone of princely courtesy. A stranger could not have told if she liked that proffer or no. Guiraut of the Vale made obeisance. Prince Gaucelm rose, putting an end to the audience.

Two hours later he came to the chamber of the ugly princess. It was a room set in a tower, large, with narrow windows commanding three directions. A curtained archway showed a smaller, withdrawing room. Rugs lay upon the oaken floor and the walls were hidden by hangings worked with the wander-

ings of Ulysses. The bed had silken curtains and a rich coverlet. Jutting from the hearth came a great cushioned settle. There were chairs, carven chests for wardrobe, a silver image of the Virgin, nearby a row of books. Present in the room when the prince came were the Lady Guida and the girl who had told in hall the story of Arthur's knights. These, upon his entrance, took embroidery-frame and book, and disappeared into the smaller room.

Prince Gaucelm sat in the corner of the settle by the hearth. The Princess Audiart now stood before him, and now walked with slow steps to one or another window and back again. The prince watched her.

"Audiart, Audiart!" he said at last; "I doubt me that the hey-day and summer of peace has passed for Roche-de-Frêne!"

"Winter is the time between summers."

"Have it so. . . . It was wise to delay this knight the week out."

"Ah, where is Wisdom? Even the hem of her mantle turns out to be a stray light-beam in shadow. But it seemed wiser. So one may think a little."

"Now, by God Almighty!" said Gaucelm, "it needs not much thinking!"

"No. But still one may take time and speak Montmaure fair, while we study what will come and how we meet and defeat it. . . . Let us deal first with Thibaut Canteleu and Roche-de-Frêne."

Gaucelm the Fortunate, leaning forward, warmed

his hands at the fire which was burning with a singing sound. "Aye, my burghers — Child, all over the green earth they cease to be mine or another's burghers!"

"They grow to be their own men. Yes."

"Gaucelm of the Star thought that idea the strangest, most abhorrent! — and his father before him — and so backward into time. It outraged them, angering the very core of the heart within them! Late and soon they would have fought the town!"

"Or late or soon they would have lost. — Does it in truth anger us that Thibaut Canteleu and the others should wish to choose their magistrates?"

"No. Montmaure angers me, but not Thibaut."

"Then let us act toward the town from our own thought and mind, and not from that of our fathers."

She paced the floor. "I sorrow for Bishop Ugo's disappointment. It will be a sword thrust if we and the town embrace!"

"Aye. Ugo desires that quarrel for us. . . . Well, then we say to Thibaut Canteleu, 'Burgher, grow your own man!'"

"I counsel it," said Audiart. "It is right."

"And wise?"

She turned from the window. "Pardieu! If war is upon us Montmaure's self might say that it were wise!"

The prince pondered it. "Yes — Put, then, Thibaut Canteleu and the town to one side. Now Montmaure — Montmaure — Montmaure!"

The princess came to the settle and sat down, leaning her elbow upon a small table drawn before it. Upon the table lay writing materials, together with a number of small counters and figures of wood. There was also a drawing, a rude map as it were, of the territory of Roche-de-Frêne, bordered by the names of contiguous great fiefs. She drew this between them, and the two, father and daughter, studied it as they talked. With her left hand she moved the little pieces of wood to and fro. Upon each was painted a name — names of castles, towns, villages, abbeys that held from Gaucelm. One piece had the name of that fief for which Montmaure had been wont to give homage.

Gaucelm looked at the long space upon the drawing marked "Aquitaine." "Guiraut of the Vale is a braggart. I know not if he bragged beyond reason of Richard's great help."

"It is like enough that he did. But Richard Lion-Heart has often backed another's quarrel. Pity he looks not to see if it be stained or clean!"

"Toulouse still holds him. . . . Stephen the Marshal must go quickly to King Philip at Paris."

"Yes. Before Guiraut of the Vale's week is gone by — or right upon that departure? Right upon it, I think."

"Yes. No need to show Guiraut what you expect." He touched the wooden pieces with his finger, running over the names of his barons. "Letters must be written and heralds sent. Madonna

Alazais and Guida, Raimon Seneschal and Aimeric the Gay, had best plan shining and dazzling entertainment for Guiraut and his following. . . . I know well that the 'great count' is making his muster."

"He makes no secret of it. . . . *But one road to peace for Roche-de-Frêne.*"

"That is not a road," said Prince Gaucelm, "or it is a road of dishonour. Savaric of Montmaure and his son have in them a demon. Waste no words upon a way that we are not going!"

He took a quill from the table, dipped it into ink, and began to write upon a bit of paper, making a computation of strength. He put down many lords whose suzerain he was, and beneath each name its quota of knights, sergeants, and footmen, the walled towns besides Roche-de-Frêne that called him lord, the villages, the castles, manors, and religious houses, Roche-de-Frêne itself, and this great castle that had never been taken. He added allies to the list, and the sum of gold and silver he thought he could command, and with part of it purchase free companies. He paused, then added help — an uncertain quantity — from his suzerain, King Philip. "It is a fair setting-forth," said Gaucelm the Fortunate. "Once, and that not so long ago, Montmaure would not in his most secret dream have dared —. But he has made favour and wily bargains, and snapping up this fief and that, played the great carp in the pool! And now drifts by this fancy of Aquitaine for Count Jaufre, and he seizes it."

"Aye, it is Richard that gives sunshine to his war!"

Gaucelm rose from the settle. "I love not war, though we live in a warring world. Little by little, child, it may change."

The day passed, the evening of courtly revel, of paces woven around Guiraut of the Vale. The Princess Audiart was again in her chamber, her women dismissed, the candles extinguished, the winter stars looking in at window, fresh logs upon the hearth casting tongues of light. These struck in places the pictured hangings. Here Ulysses dallied with Calypso and here he met Circe. Here Nausicaa threw the ball, and here Penelope wove the web and unravelled it, and here Minerva paced with shield and spear. The figures were as rude as the hues were bright, but a fresh and keen imagination brought them into human roundness and proportion.

Audiart lay in her bed, and they surrounded her as they had done since early girlhood when at her entreaty this chamber in the White Tower had been given her. She was glad now to be alone with the familiar figures and with the fitful firelight and the stars that, when the hearth-blaze sank, she could see through the nearest window. She was read in the science of her time; those points of light, white or bluish or golden, had for her an interest of the mind and of the spirit. Now, through the window, there gleamed in upon her one of the astrologers' "royal" stars. She by no means believed all that the astrol-

ogers said. She was sceptic toward much that was preached, doubted the usefulness of much that was done, and yet could act though she doubted. When doubt, growing, became a sense of probability, then — swerve her as it might from her former course — she would act, as forthright as might be, in the interest of that sense.

The star shone in the western window — red Aldebaran. "You look like war, Aldebaran, Aldebaran!" thought the princess. "Come, tell me if Gaucelm, the good man, will win over Savaric, the wicked man — You tell naught — you tell naught!"

She turned on her side and spread her arms and buried her face between them, and lay so for some minutes. Then she rose from the bed, and taking from a chair beside it a long and warm robe of fine wool, slipped her arms into its great hanging sleeves, girded it around her and crossed to the southward-giving window. She looked forth and down upon wall and moat, and beyond upon the roofs of Roche-de-Frêne. A warder pacing the walk below, passed with a gleam of steel from her sight. A convent bell rang midnight. There was no moon, but the night burned with stars. One shot above the town, leaving a swiftly fading line of light. She saw all the roofs that lay this way and knew them. Castle and town, river and bridge, and the country beyond, felt not seen to-night — they were home, bathed, suffused, coloured by the profound, the inmost self, part of the self, dissolving into it. She stood before

the window, a hand upon either wall, and her heart yearned over Roche-de-Frêne. Again a star shot, below her the warder passed again. Suddenly she thought of Jaufre de Montmaure, and much disliked the thought. She spoke to the stars. "Ah," she said, "it is much misery at times to be a woman!"

A week from that day, in the castle hall, crowded from end to end, — Bishop Ugo here to-day with churchmen behind him, ranks of knights, Gaucelm's great banner spread behind the dais, and against it his shield blazoned with the orbs and wheat-sheafs of Roche-de-Frêne and the motto *I build;* everywhere a richness of spectacle, an evidenced power, a high vitality, a tension as of the bow string before the skilled arrow flies, — Thibaut Canteleu received the answer for the town, and Guiraut of the Vale the answer for Count Savaric of Montmaure. Behind Thibaut was the deputation that had attended before, the same blues and greens and reds, bright as stained glass, the same faces swarthy, or lacking blood, or pink and white of hue. Thibaut knelt in his blue tunic and grey hosen, his cap beside him on the pavement.

Henceforth the town of Roche-de-Frêne should choose its own officers — mayor, council and others. Likewise it should give judgement through judges of its election upon its own offenders — always excepting those cases that came truly before its lord's bailiff-court. Prince Gaucelm gave decision gravely, without haughtiness, or warning against abuse of

kindness, or claim upon increased loyalty, and without many words. Roche-de-Frêne took it, first, in a silence complete and striking, then with a long breath and fervent exclamation.

Thibaut Canteleu lifted his cap and stood up. He faced the dais squarely. "My lord the prince and my Lady Audiart, give you thanks! As you deal justly, so may this town deal justly! As you fight for us so may we fight for you! As you give us loving-kindness, so may we give you loving-kindness! As you measure to us, so may we measure to you! May you live long, lord, and be prince of us and of our children! And you, my Lady Audiart, may you stay with us, here in Roche-de-Frêne!"

Whereby it might be guessed that Thibaut and Roche-de-Frêne knew well enough of Guiraut of the Vale's errand. Probably they did. The time was electric, and Montmaure had been seen for some time, looming upon the horizon. Roche-de-Frêne, nor no town striving for liberties, cared for Montmaure. He was of those who would strangle in its cradle the infant named Middle Class.

Gaucelm thanked the burghers of Roche-de-Frêne, and the Princess Audiart said, "I thank you, Thibaut Canteleu, and all these with you."

The fifty were marshalled aside. They did not leave the hall; it behooved them to stay and hear the answer to Montmaure.

All the gleaming and coloured particles slightly changed place, the bowstring tension grew higher.

Here was now Guiraut of the Vale, the accompanying knights behind him, standing to hear what answer he should take to the Count of Montmaure. The answer given him to take was brief, clothed in courtesy, and without a hint in its voice or eye of the possibility of untoward consequences. Roche-de Frêne thanked Montmaure for the honour meant, but the Princess Audiart was resolved not to wed.

Guiraut of the Vale, magnificent in dress and air, heard, and towered a moment in silence, then flung out his hands, took a tone, harsh and imperious. "You give me, Prince of Roche-de-Frêne, an ill answer with which to return to the great count, my master! You set a bale-fire and a threat upon the one road of peace between your land and Montmaure! And for that my master was foretold by a sorceress that so would you answer him, I am here not unprovided with an answer to your answer!" With that he made a stride forward and flung down a glove upon the dais, at Gaucelm's feet. "Gaucelm the Fortunate, Montmaure will war upon you until he and his son shall sit where now you and your daughter are seated! Montmaure will war upon you until men know you as Gaucelm the Unhappy! Montmaure will war upon you until the Princess Audiart shall kneel for mercy to Count Jaufre —"

The hall shouted with anger. The ranks of knights slanted toward the envoy. Gaucelm's voice at last brought quiet. "The man is a herald and sacred!

—My lord Stephen the Marshal, take up the Count of Montmaure's glove!"

So began the war between Roche-de-Frêne and Montmaure.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VENETIAN

THAT year Saladin was victor in Syria and the Kingdom of Jerusalem fell. Many a baron, knight, and footman was slain that year in the land over the sea! Those who could escape left that place of burning heat and Paynim victory. Another crusade they might go, but here and now was downfall! A part survived and reached their homes, and a part perished at sea, or in shipwreck on strange shores.

Sir Eudes de Panemonde, an old man now and bent, came home to his castle and fief. With him came his son, Sir Aimar, a beautiful and brave knight, all bronzed with the sun, with fame on his shield and crest. With them came a third knight, bronzed too by the sun, with fame on his shield and crest. He had been Garin de Castel-Noir, and then Garin Rogier, and now, for five years, Sir Garin of the Golden Island, — Garin de l'Isle d'Or, — known in the land over the sea for exploits of an extreme, an imaginative daring, and also for the songs he made and sang in Frank and English fortress halls. He was knight and famed knight, and three emirs' ransoms stood between him and the chill of poverty. Two esquires served him. He had horses, — better could not be bought in Syria! He

had brought off in safety men-at-arms in his pay. He was known for wearing over his mail a surcoat of deep blue, and on the breast embroidered a bird with outstretched wings. He was all bronzed and rightly lean of face and frame, strongly-knit, adventurous, courteous, could be gay and could be melancholy, showed not his entire depth, but let the inner fountain, darkly pure, still send up jets and hues of being. He and Sir Aimar were brothers-in-arms, were Damon and Pythias. He was, also, true poet. Many a song had he made since that first song, made where he lay upon a boundary stone, by the stream that flowed past Castel-Noir and on to Our Lady in Egypt. And always he sang of one whom he named the Fair Goal. That name was known in Crusaders' cities, in tents that were pitched upon desert sands. He himself was known and welcomed. Comrade-Frank or Englishman or German cried with pleasure, "Here comes the singer!" — or "the lover!" as might be.

In the castle of Panemonde there was welcome and feasting. The strong kinsman had not proved weak in fidelity, but had held afar from the fief eagle and kite, while at home the Lady of Panemonde, a small, fair, determined woman, had administered with great ability castle, village, and the fields that fed both. Here were Crusaders who, unlike enough to many, had not come home impoverished, or to lands ravaged and debt-ridden. And Sir Eudes's old sin was now wiped out of the memory of God,

and he could sit in the sun and wait death with a peaceful mind. And Sir Aimar was so beautiful and strong a knight that his suzerain, the Count of Toulouse, would be sure to give him opportunity by which he might win fame for Panemonde beyond that which he had brought from across the sea. Garin de l'Isle d'Or, too, looked for service that should win him land and castle.

Toulouse! No sooner had their ship come to port than they learned that Aquitaine warred against Toulouse, Duke Richard claiming the latter through his mother, Duchess Eleanor. But hardly had they taken the road to Panemonde before they heard the news that Richard and Count Raymond had made in some sort peace, due, perhaps, to hold, and perhaps due not to hold. Coming to Panemonde they found that the lady there had furnished Count Raymond the spears that the fief owed, and that, the fighting over, some of these had returned. Some would never return.

They feasted and rejoiced at Panemonde, giving and hearing news. Kindred and friends came about the restored from over the sea. There were feasts in the hall, exercises in the tilting yard, hunting and singing. They carried in procession to the monastery church a vial of water from the Jordan, a hands-breadth of silk from the bliaut of Joseph of Arimathea. They gave holiday to the serfs and remitted a tax. The early summer days went highly and well.

Sir Aimar had a sister, Aigletta, a fair, rose-cheeked, dark-eyed lady. She was fain to hear stories of Saladin from her brother, and she liked to listen to the lute and the deep, rich and sweet voice of Garin of the Golden Island. He sang when she asked it, seated in hall or in garden, or perhaps resting by the little stream without the castle wall, where you looked across the bridge of one arch to the eastward-stretching highway. Oftenest Garin sang other men's songs, but when she asked it, he sang his own. Aigletta listened with a pensive look. Her brother found her alone one day in the garden, a white rose by her knee, her smooth cheek resting upon her hand. He sat beside her.

"Sister, ladies more than two or three have wished that Sir Garin would sing not so much for them as of them! And still he sings only of the Fair Goal."

"Who is she?" asked Aigletta.

"Who knows? He knows not himself. But she is as a hedge of white roses to keep him from other loves. So I would not have you, sister, scorch the finger-tip of your heart!"

"I? Not I!" said Aigletta. "I dip my finger-tips in cool, running water! — But, truly, to sing for years of a lady whom he knows not by sight — !"

"A poet can do even that," said Aimar. "And it is not true that he hath never seen her. He saw her once, where she rested at an abbey, though I am not sure that he saw her face. But now for years he

hath made her famous — loving her, or loving the love of her."

"By my faith!" said Aigletta. "Truly a poet finds roses where others feel snow! — Well, I am no thief to take away a lady's knight! And, perhaps, as you say, fair brother, I could not do it."

"I think that you could not, fair sister. His Fair Goal has become to him as air and light, streaming through the house of being."

They had not been long at Panemonde when they had news that eastward of Toulouse the Count of Montmaure made bitter war against Roche-de-Frêne, and that Aquitaine greatly helped Montmaure, while King Philip, distracted by quarrels nearer home, sent to the aid of Roche-de-Frêne but a single company of spears. Now, traditionally, Toulouse was friendly to Roche-de-Frêne, but Toulouse was weary of war, and had made pact with Duke Richard. Moreover Toulouse had present trouble with a spreading heresy and Holy Church's disfavour. Panemonde heard that Montmaure made very grim war.

For Sir Garin and Sir Aimar the future pushed its head above the present's rich repose. When war swung his iron bell knights must hearken — not the old knight, ready now for rest from war, for comtemplation of a Heaven where that bell lay broken — but the young men, the inheritors of wrath. Aimar wished to ride to Toulouse, to Count Ray-

mond. Garin of the Golden Island would not show restlessness in the house of his benefactor, but those who were awake saw him pacing at dawn the castle wall, or leaning against the battlement, watching the rose in the east.

Once he had assured Sir Eudes and his son that he was of Limousin. But ere he received knighthood he had told plainly his birthplace and home, name, and fealty, and that anger of Montmaure against him. In the land beyond the sea much of the past had drifted toward remoteness, many degrees of experience coming between it and him. But now, early and late, he began to think of Castel-Noir and of Foulque — Foulque who had heard naught of him since that night in which they had parted, beneath the old cypress. The cypress itself rose before him, and the thought of Sicart and Jean. Paladin might be living. Tower and crag and wood, the stream that slipped through the wood — he wished to see them. Not only Castel-Noir — even Raimbaut's half-ruinous hold — even Raimbaut the Six-fingered himself. Garin half laughed at the thought of the giant. And he wished to follow down that stream again — to see again the boundary stone of Our Lady of Egypt — to find again that little lawn with the cedar, plane, and poplar — to touch again that carved seat, so near the laurels. . . .

He rose from his bed and, while the morning star was still shining, went down the stair and crossing the court mounted the castle wall. Here he rested

arms against the stone and gazed at the east where was now a little colour.

Montmaure warred against Roche-de-Frêne. Raimbaut held from Montmaure, but Montmaure, for that fief, was vassal to Roche-de-Frêne. They said that the war was bitter and far-flung. Garin knew not if Raimbaut, carrying with him Castel-Noir, clave to Montmaure, or to the over-lord that was Roche-de-Frêne. There sprang within him wish and belief that it was to Roche-de-Frêne. Montmaure! His lips moved, his brow darkened. In imagination he wrestled again with Jaufre de Montmaure. Then, athwart that mood, came again, and stronger than before, a great longing to follow once more that southward-slipping stream, and to hear the nightingale in the covert, and to come again through the laurels to the lawn, the cedar, and the chair of stone. The east was like a rose. "I will tarry no longer!" said Garin.

Five days later he and Aimar rode away toward Toulouse. Behind them, well mounted, rode their esquires, bearing lance and shield; behind these, threescore mounted men. The two knights kneeled for Sir Eudes's blessing, they kissed the cheek of the Lady of Panemonde and of the dark-eyed Aigletta; they went away like a piece of the summer, and all the castle out to see them go. Here was the bridge, here the road, here a lime tree that Garin remembered, but in an autumn dress. Now it was green and palest gold, fragrant, murmurous with

bees. Farther, and here was the calvary, and the way that branched to church and monastery. Wherever there were people, they stopped in their tracks upon the road, or in the fields dropped their work and stood to see the knights go by, with the goodly men behind them. The sky was dazzling blue, the world drenched with light and heat.

They meant to lodge that night in the town to which Garin had come with the scholar, and where first he had seen the cross taken. Reaching it before sunset, they looked up at its castle. But said Garin, "Let us find some hostel! It is not in my mind tonight to be questioned of the Holy Land, made to talk and sing."

Aimar agreed; could tell, too, that anciently there was here a famous inn. Passing through the town gate, they came into streets where the folk abroad and at door and window turned at the sound of the clattering hoofs, gazed at the well-appointed troop, and made free comment. All the place was bathed in a red light.

"There are many heretics in this town," said Aimar. "Catharists or *bons hommes* — men of Albi, as they are now called. The strange thing is that they seem very gentle, good people! I remember one who came to Panemonde the year before we took the cross. He sat beneath the great oak and talked to any who would listen as sweetly as if Our Lady had sent him down from Heaven! I wondered — Some of the people took up stones to stone him, but

I would not let him be hurt, and he went away. I wondered —"

Garin's squire, Rainier, had been sent ahead to the inn, and now rode back to meet them. "Sirs, a Venetian merchant-lord and his people possess the house! But I have caught one fair chamber from the Italian's clutch and the hostess promises good supper and soon. For the men, the next street hath the Olive Tree and the Sheaf and Sickle."

They came to the great inn, a low, capacious building with a courtyard, and in a corner of this a spacious arbour overrun by a grape-vine. It was sunset. The knights and their squires dismounted, and a sumpter mule with its load was brought from the rear. Men came from the inn stable and took away the horses. Orders as to the morning start having been given, the troop from Panemonde trotted off, down an unpaved lane, to the lesser hostels. The hostess appeared, a woman of great size with a face as genial as the sun. She poured forth words as to preëmpted quarters, regrets, admirations, welcomes, hints that they were as well off here as at the castle where the lord was healing him of a grisly wound, and the lady had yesterday been brought to bed of a woman-child. Then she herself marshalled the knights, the squire Rainier following, to a chamber reasonably large and clean. Maids brought basins and ewers of water. Rainier busied himself with squire's duties. He, too, looked to knighthood, somewhere in the future. The bright evening light

came through the window. Below, under the grape-arbour, serving-men placed boards on trestles, and furnished forth a table.

The inn followed a good fashion, and on these warm and long days spread supper in the largest, most open hall that might be. When they descended to the court it was to find the Venetian great merchant already at table, sitting with two others above the salt. He was a lordly person, dressed in prune-coloured cendal, breathing potencies of travel and trade. In his air were Venice and her doges, the equal sea and the flavour of gold.

He greeted the two knights courteously, and they returned his greeting. They took their places, the squire below them. Supper went well, with the hum of life around the arbour, and the sky's warm tint showing between twisted branches of the vine. When hunger was satisfied, they talked. They who spent years in the East came back to Europe with certain Saracenic touches of conduct and manner that to such as the Venetian told at least part of their history. He began at once to speak of cities beyond the sea — of Jaffa, Tripoli, Edessa, Aleppo, Damascus. In turn Garin and Aimar questioned him of Venice, paved with the sea.

When they had eaten, they washed and dried their hands. Serving-men took away the dishes, the boards and trestles. The arbour was left, a cool and pleasant place, with a table whereon was set wine of the country, with the summer stars brightening

overhead, and a vagrant wind lifting the vine leaves. They tarried under the arbour, drinking the red wine and talking now of matters nearer at hand than was Venice or Damascus. Around was the hum of the town, of the long, warm evening settling into night. Out from the inn door came voices of the inn people. The hostess was rating some idle man or maid. "May Aquitaine take you —!"

The Venetian, it seemed, was on his way to Barcelona, had travelled yesterday from the city of Toulouse. He had left Venice the past winter, and in the interest of that sea-queen and her trade had been in many towns and a guest of many courts. Of late, war, blazing forth, had disarranged his plans, preoccupied his hosts. He was in a most ill humour with this warring.

"Fair sirs, I look not that you should believe me, but one day it will be found that war is the name of the general foe! For what, say I, is the mind given to you?" He drank his wine. "Now the Count of Montmaure wars against the Prince of Roche-de-Frêne! In Montmaure trade is broken on the wheel. In Roche-de-Frêne she is burned at the stake." He tapped the wine-cup with his fingers. "Trade is the true ship — War is the pirate!"

Garin spoke. "I have hours in which I should believe that you were right. Love, too, and the finer thought are broken on the wheel! But it is the way of the world, and we are knights who go to war."

"My lord of Montmaure fights," said the mer-

chant, "like a fiend! Or so the Count of Toulouse told me. The country of Roche-de-Frêne is harried and wasted. Now he goes about to besiege the town and the castle."

"We have been home no great while," said Aimar, "and our castle is in a corner of the land and away from hearing how the wind blows elsewhere."

The Venetian sipped his wine, then set down the cup. "I spent a week before this war broke forth, in the castle of Roche-de-Frêne. I found the prince a wise man, with for wife the most beauteous lady my eyes have gazed upon!"

"Aye," said Garin. "Alazais the Fair, men called her."

"Just. Alazais the Fair. — While I was in the castle came the Count of Montmaure's demand for the prince's daughter for wife to his son. Certes, I think," said the merchant, "that he knew she would be refused him! Cause of war, or mask-reason for a meant war — now they war."

"We heard something of all this," said Aimar.

Garin spoke again. He was back in mind at Castel-Noir. "That is the Princess Audiart. I remember their saying that she was ugly and unlike others — like a changeling. They were praying for a son to Prince Gaucelm."

"She is not a changeling," answered the Venetian. "She is a very wise lady, though she is not fair as is her step-dame. I saw her sit beside the Prince in council and the people love her. Now,

they say, she is as brave as a lion. Pardieu! If I were knight, or knight-errant —"

"Are they hard pressed?" Garin spoke, his hands before him on the table.

"So 't is said. Montmaure has gathered a host and Richard of Aquitaine gives to Count Jaufre another as great. At Toulouse there was much talk of the matter."

The Venetian emptied his glass, looked up at the stars, and, the day's travel having been wearying, thought of his bed. Presently he rose, his people with him, said a courteous good night and quitted the arbour.

The two knights waited a little longer, sitting in silence. Then they, too, left the arbour, and, Rainier attending, went to the chamber that had been given. Here sleep came soon. But in the first light of morning Sir Aimar, waking, saw Garin standing, half-clothed, at the window.

"Aimar," said Garin, "you must to Toulouse, for Count Raymond is your suzerain and Sir Eudes hath your promise that you follow no adventure until you have received lord's leave. But for me that makes too long delay. I will ride on to Roche-de-Frêne."

Sir Aimar sat upon the side of the bed. "I thought last eve that I saw the knight-errant look forth from your eye! Will you rescue this ugly princess?"

"Ugly or fair, she is a lady in distress — and

Jaufre de Montmaure does her wrong.... Her father is my liege lord. I have had a vision too, of my brother Foulque, hard bestead. I cannot tarry to go about by Toulouse."

Aimar agreed to that. "My father hath my promise. — But I will follow you as soon as I may. Pardieu! If what the Venetian said be true, every knight will be welcome!"

"I think that it was true. — Ha!" said Garin to himself, "I see again the autumn wood, and Jaufre de Montmaure who beats to her knees that herd-girl!"

The two knights, Garin and Aimar, left the town together, in the brightness of the morning. But a mile or two beyond the walls their ways parted. Their followers were divided between them — each had now two esquires and more than a score of men-at-arms. Each small troop came in line behind its leader. Then the two knights, dismounting, embraced. Each commended the other to the care of the Mother of God. They made a rendezvous; they would meet again, brothers-in-arms, as soon as might be. They remounted — each troop cried farewell to the other — Sir Aimar and those with him turned aside into the way to Toulouse.

Sir Garin waited without movement until a great screen of poplars came between him and his brother knight. Then he spoke to his courser, and with his men behind him, began to pursue the road to the country of his birth. As he travelled he saw in fancy,

coming toward him on this road, Garin de Castel-Noir clad in a serf's dress, fleeing from Montmaure, in his heart and brain hopes and fears, a welling-up of poesy, and the image of his lady whom he named the Fair Goal. Garin of the Golden Island, older by nigh eight years of time and a world of experience, rich, massy, and intricate, smiled on that other Garin and saw how far he had to travel — but without finding as yet the Fair Goal!

CHAPTER XIV

OUR LADY IN EGYPT

THE air quivered above all surfaces; light and heat spoke with intensity. But those who had been long years in Syria were used to a greater intensity. They travelled now, not minding heat and glare. They rode through a little village that Garin remembered, and at the farther end passed a house with mulberry trees. Children played in their shade. "Ha!" said Garin of the Golden Island. "Time's wheel goes round, and the fountain casts new spray!"

Rainier the squire knew this country-side. A certain castle was placed conveniently for dinner-time, and to this they drew from the high road. Where you did not war, there obtained, in the world of chivalry, a boundless hospitality. The lord who held this castle made all welcome. A great bell rang; here was dinner in the hall.

From the castle tower one saw afar, beyond the boundaries of Toulouse. The baron could give information. Duke Richard had spared Jaufre de Montmaure two thousand spears and ten thousand men-at-arms, archers, and crossbowmen. Montmaure, himself, had a great force. Roche-de-Frêne fought strongly, but the land suffered. Stories were

told of the ways of Montmaure. Garin made enquiry as to the Abbey of Saint Pamphilius, not far to the northward. "Saint Pamphilius? Safe as though it held by God the Father's beard! Years ago it chose Montmaure for advocate. Aye! Abbot Arnaut lives." But the lord of the castle could not tell of Raimbaut the Six-fingered, if he held with Montmaure, or, passing him, clave to Roche-de-Frêne.

The castle would have had them bide the night, and the Crusader discourse of the Holy Land. But Garin must on. His imagination was seized; what lay before him drew him imperiously, like a loadstone. He bade the lord and lady of the castle farewell, mounted his horse, Noureddin, and with his men behind him took the road. The earth lay drowned in light, the air seemed hardly a strip of gauze between it and the sun. They must ride somewhat slowly through the afternoon. At last the heat and dazzle of the day declined. Straight before them lay the Abbey of Saint Pamphilius, and that were good harbourage for the night, but not for any who meant to enter battle upon the side of Roche-de-Frêne! The night would be dry, warm and bright. The men had food with them, in leathern pouches. Forest lay to the right of the road.

Garin spoke to his squires: "It is to my fancy to sleep in this wood to-night. Once I did sleep here, but without esquires and men-at-arms and warhorse."

It chanced that the moon was almost full. Garin watched it mount between the branches of the trees, and the past rose with it to suffuse the present. He could recall the moods of that night, but they seemed to him now frail and boyish. . . . Dawn broke; his men rose from where they lay like brown acorns. Nearby, the stream that ran through the wood widened into a pool. Knight, squires, and men-at-arms laid aside clothing, plunged into the cool element, had joy of it. Afterwards, they breakfasted sparely. When the sun lighted the hill-tops they were again upon the road.

The road now trended eastward. They came to a chapel that was a ruin. Beside it, scooped from the hillside and shaded by an oak, appeared a hermit's cell. At first they thought that it was empty, but at length a grey figure, lean and trembling as a reed, peeped forth.

"Who broke down the chapel, father?" asked Garin.

The hermit stared at him. "Fair son and sir knight, are you from the Toulouse side?"

"We have ridden two days from the westward. This is the boundary?"

The hermit looked with lack-lustre eyes, then wagged his head up and down. "Aye, fair knight and son! The lords of Toulouse and Roche-de-Frêne built the chapel, each bearing half the cost. But a band belonging to the Lord of Montmaure came this way. Its captain said that he pulled down only

Roche-de-Frêne's half — but all fell! The Holy Father at Rome ought to hear of it!"

"Are Montmaure's men still at hand?"

The hermit shook his head. "They harrowed the country and went. I saw flames all one night and heard the cries of the damned!"

Garin and those behind him rode on. Immediately the way that once had been good became bad. A bridge had spanned a swift stream, but the bridge was destroyed. A mill had stood near, but the mill was burned. There seemed no folk. They rode by trampled and blackened fields where no harvest sickles would come this year. The poppies looked like blood. Here, in a dip in the land, was what had been a village, and upon a low hill a heap of stones that had been castle or armed manor-house. There were yet fearful odours. They rode by a tree on which were hanged ten men, and a place where women and children, all crouched together, had been slain. Here were more blackened fields, splashed with poppies. The sun, now riding high, sent into every corner a searching light.

Garin and his men, leaving the ruin, rode through a great forest. They rode cautiously, keeping a lookout, neither singing nor laughing nor talking loudly. But the forest slept on either hand, and there was nothing heard but the hoofs of their horses, the song of birds, and the whirr of insects.

This forest had been known to Garin the squire. He was going now toward Raimbaut's keep. Around

were the wide-branching trees, the birds flew before them, the startled hare ran, the deer plunged aside into the deeper brakes, but they met with no human life. Travelling so, they came to a broken country, wooded hills, grey falls of cliff, streams that brawled over stony beds. Garin looked from side to side, recognizing ancient landmarks. But when they rode out from the dwindling wood upon fields that should have shone and shimmered, yellowing to the harvest — these fields, too, were black with ruin. Here was a meadow that Garin knew. But no cattle stood within it, seeking the shade of the trees, and nowhere, field or meadow or narrow road, were there people. All lay silent, without motion, under the giant strength of the sun.

The road passed under the brow of a hill, turned, and he saw where had been the grim old keep and tower and wall where he had served Raimbaut the Six-fingered. In its shadow had clustered peasants' huts. All was destroyed; he saw not a living man, not a beast, not a dog. "How like," said Garin of the Golden Island, "are Paynimry and Christendom!"

He checked his men, and alone rode to the ruins. Dismounting, he let Noureddin crop the parched grass while he himself entered through a breach in the wall, the gateway being blocked by fallen masonry. All was desolate under the sun. The well had been filled with stones. Climbing a mass of débris, crushed wall and fallen beam and rafter,

he attained the interior of the keep. Here had been sword and fire; here now were the charred bones, here the writing that said how had fought Raimbaut the Six-fingered!

Garin came out of the keep and crossed the court, and, stepping through the ragged and monstrous opening in the wall, called to his men. Three hours they worked, making a grave and laying within it every charred body they found, and making one grave for the forms of a giant and of a woman who had fallen beside him.

"I knew this castle," said Sir Garin. "This was its lord, and he could fight bravely! Nor did he fail at times of kindness done. This was its lady, and she was like him."

At last they rode away from Raimbaut's castle. First, came other fields that this storm had struck, then a curving arm, thick and dark, of forest. But, on the further edge of this flowed a stream where the bridge was not broken, and nearby was the hut of one who burned charcoal, and the man and woman and their children were within and living. They fell upon their knees and put up their hands for mercy.

"We are not Montmaure!" said Garin. "Jean Charcoal-burner, have you heard if they have done the like to Castel-Noir?"

The charcoal-burner, of elf locks and blackened skin, stared at the knight, and now thought that he knew him, and now that he knew him not. But

he had comfort to give as to Castel-Noir. He had been there within three days, and it stood. It was so small a tower and out of the way — Montmaure's band had ignored it, or were gone for the time to set claws in other prey. "Sir Foulque? — aye, Sir Foulque lived."

Garin came to Castel-Noir in the red flush of evening. The fir wood lay quiet and dark, haunted by memory. The stream was as ever it was. Looking up, he saw the lonely, small castle, the round tower — saw, too, a scurrying to it, from the surrounding huts, of men, women and children. They went like partridges, up the steep, grey road, across the narrow moat, and in at the gate. The drawbridge mounted, creaking and groaning.

"Ah," said Garin with a sob in his throat, "Foulque thinks that we are foes!"

He left his men among the firs, and rode on Noureddin up the path known so well — so well! He rode without spear and shield, and unhelmed. Watchers from loophole or battlement might see only a bronzed horseman, wearing a blue surcoat, worked upon the breast with a bird with outstretched wings. When he came to the edge of the moat, beneath the wall, he checked Noureddin, sat motionless for a minute, then raised his voice. "Castel-Noir!"

A man looked over the wall. "Who and whence, and, Mother of God! whose voice are you calling with?"

"Sicart!" called Garin, "remember eight years, come Martinmas, and the serf's dress you found me! Put the bridge down and let me in!"

Foulque met him in the gateway.

"Brother Foulque —"

"Garin, Garin —"

Fir wood, crag, and black castle travelled from the sun, faced the unlighted deeps. But an inner sun shone and warmed. The squires, the troop, had welcome and welcome again. Nothing there was that Sicart and Jean and Pol and Arnaut and all the others would not do for them! Comforts and treasures were scant, but the whole was theirs. The saints seemed benignant, so smoothly and fragrantly did matters go! Pierre found savoury food for all. And there was forage for the horses. And the courtyard on a summer night, with straw spread down, was good sleeping. But before there was sleeping, came tale-telling — a great ring gathered, with the round moon looking down, and Castel-Noir men and boys and women and girls from the huts below, listening — listening — gaping and exultant! Sir Garin of the Golden Island — and how he had taken the cross — and what he had done in the land over the sea, and the tale-tellers with him!

Fairyland had somehow come to Castel-Noir — a warm Paradise of pride in the native-born, relish for brave deeds, forward felt glow from perhaps vastly better days! Through all ran a filtering of Eastern wonder. There was, too, simple veneration

for the slayers of paynims, for beings who had travelled in the especial country of God! The pride in Garin was strong. They had thought him dead, though some had insisted that, maybe, one day he would come back, a knight. These now basked in their own wisdom. But even they had not dreamed the whole fairy tale out! Sir Garin of the Golden Island — and how he got that name — and how he fought and how he sang and how lords and kings were fain of his company — and his brother-in-arms, Sir Aimar — and the three emirs' ransoms! The people of Castel-Noir forgot Montmaure and danger, and were blissful that night beneath the round and golden moon.

Garin and Foulque bided within the hall, talked there, Garin pacing up and down while Foulque the Cripple gloated on him from his chair. They had torchlight, but the moonlight, too, streamed in. Garin charted for his brother the unknown sea of the years he had been away. Foulque followed him to Panemonde, to the port, to Syria — and then all the events and fortune there!

"Ha, ha!" laughed Foulque. "Ha ha! ha ha! Who knows anything in this world? Oh, dire misfortune that it seemed to have fought with Jaufre de Montmaure! And here he has given you knighthood and fame and ransom-wealth! Ha, ha, ha! Let me laugh! Yesterday I was weeping."

"If you push things in that direction," said Garin, "before it was Jaufre it was that herd-girl with the

torn dress and streaming hair! There is a path from all things to all things else."

He stopped before a window embrasure and looked out upon the moon-flooded court and the ring of his men and the Castel-Noir men. When he turned back to Foulque they took up the years as they had gone for the black castle. They had gone without great events until had befallen this war. That being the case, the two were presently at the huge happenings in the princedom of Roche-de-Frêne. Foulque knew of the fate of Raimbaut the Six-fingered. Jean the Charcoal-burner had brought the news. Since that, Castel-Noir had stood somewhat shiveringly upon its rock, the probabilities being that its own hour was near.

And yet Foulque, and Garin with him, agreed that since the band that had entered this fief and beat down Raimbaut and his castle was now gone without finding Castel-Noir, it might not think to return upon its tracks, leaving richer prey for sparrow or hare. Foulque considered that the ravagers had been Free Companions, mercenaries bought by Montmaure from far away, not knowing nook and corner of the country they devastated. Montmaure, angered, had made his threat when Raimbaut, renouncing the immediate allegiance, held for Roche-de-Frêne. He had kept it, sending fire and death. But Castel-Noir might stay hidden in its fir wood. Foulque, a born sceptic, here showed one contrary streak. He was credulous now of all evil from Jaufre

de Montmaure being turned aside from aught that pertained to Garin. "Certes, not after procuring you knighthood and gold!"

Garin learned of the war at large. In the spring Prince Gaucelm had gathered a great host. Under Stephen the Marshal it had met and beaten as great a number, Count Savaric at the head. Savaric had been wounded, thrust back, him and his host, into his own land. Then had come with a greater host Jaufre de Montmaure, like an evil wind. His father, too, recovering, rushed again from Montmaure. Prince Gaucelm and all his knights and a host of men withstood them. Everywhere there was ringing of shields and flying of arrows. Where Montmaure came, came blight. A walled town had been taken and sacked; another, they said, was endangered. Rumour ran that Roche-de-Frêne itself must stand a siege. Montmaure was gathering a huge number of spears and countless footmen, and had an Italian who was making for him great engines. But naught this side waking to find to-night a dream could now weaken Foulque's optimism! "Roche-de-Frêne 's no ripe plum to be picked and eaten! Pick thunderbolts from an oak that will outlive Montmaure!"

Foulque was reconciled, when the talk came that way, to Garin's early departure from Castel-Noir. Neither dreamed but that he, knight and able to help, must of course go. It was his *devoir*. But he might bide a few days. It would presently be seen

if the place were indeed moderately safe, left a small, overlooked backwater. Foulque's thin face worked with laughter. "Ha, Jaufre! — and what was it that he said touching flaying alive and razing your house? Jaufre makes me sport!" His thought drove aside from the pleasant spice of Jaufre's men preserving just Castel-Noir. "And now he would wed the princess!"

Garin, in his pacing, crossed a shaft of moonlight. "What manner of lady is the Princess Audiart?"

"Not fair, but wise, they say. I know not," said Foulque, "if women can be wise."

"Ah, yes, they may!"

"I agree," said Foulque, "that there is wisdom somewhere in not helping into the world sons of Jaufre, grandsons of Savaric! — It is said that the townspeople love the princess."

Garin crossed again the shaft of light. "No harm has come to Our Lady in Egypt?"

"No harm that I have heard of. Count Savaric is known for a good son of the Church! He will not harm the bishop's lands either. I hear report — I have heard that the Abbot of Saint Pamphilius saith — that if Montmaure conquers, Bishop Ugo will not be less but greater in Roche-de-Frêne. — But what," said Foulque, "do I know in truth to tell you? A cripple, chained to this rock in a fir wood! Little of aught do I know — save that there is wickedness on earth!" He tried to be sardonic, but

could not. "Eh!" said Foulque. "Three emirs? And at what did they hold their lives?"

At last Castel-Noir slept, the fair moon looking down. The next day, still there held fairyland. When another day came, Garin took Paladin that had waited for him all these years, and, followed by Rainier, rode to Our Lady in Egypt. He wished to see the Abbess and ask of her a question. Eight years ago, come Martinmas, what lady had rested, a guest, with Our Lady in Egypt?

The summer woods were passing sweet — fresh and sweet under whatever strength of sun to those who had come from Syrian towns and Syrian suns. Garin rode with an open heart, smelled sweet odour, heard every song and movement, praised the green wood and the blue sky. At last they saw the olives and the vineyards of Our Lady in Egypt — at last the massy building. And now Paladin stopped before a portal that Garin remembered. . . . All these years, Jaufre de Montmaure had been in the back of his head, but hardly, it may be said, the herd-girl who first had struggled with Jaufre. Memory might have brought her oftener to view, but memory, when it came to women, had been preoccupied with the Fair Goal — with the lady who wore the blue, fine stuff, the gem-wrought girdle, the eastern veil! But now, sudden and vivid as life, came back the herd-girl who had ridden behind him upon this horse, who, at the convent door under the round arch, had looked back at him through dark and

streaming hair. The portress opened to her and she entered — rushed back the very tone and sense of blankness and of wonder with which he had regarded the closed door! "Saint Agatha! how that tastes upon my tongue!" said Garin.

He sat staring at the convent portal. Around was midday heat and stillness. Drowned in that past day, he gave no heed to a sound of approaching horsemen. But now Rainier came to his side. "Sir, there are armed men coming! Best knock and gain entrance —"

But Garin turned to see who came. A small party rode into sight beneath the convent trees — not more than a dozen horsemen. One bore, depending from a lance, a pensil of blue — the blue of Roche-de-Frêne. It hung unstirring in the windless noon. In the air of the riders there was something, one knew not what, of dejection or of portent. They came neither fast nor slow, the hoofs of the horses making a sullen sound.

Garin looked. At times there blew to him, through appearances, a wind from behind appearances. It gave no definite word, but he heard the rustling of the sibyl's leaves. He drew Paladin a little to one side and awaited the riders. From the convent chapel rose a sound of chanting — the nuns at their office.

The cluster of horsemen arrived in the space before the convent door. The one who rode in front, a knight with grizzled hair and a stern, lean face,

directed an enquiry to the mounted men here before him.

Garin answered. "I am of Castel-Noir — ridden here to-day because there is that which I would ask of the Abbess Angela."

The grizzled knight shook his head. He spoke to one of those behind him. "Strike upon the door, Raynold!" then, turning in his saddle, addressed himself to the stranger knight in the blue surcoat. "Fair sir, my lady Abbess, methinks, will not wish to deal to-day with any matters that may be set aside."

"I see that you bring heavy tidings," said Garin. "I fight for Roche-de-Frêne. What are they?"

"Well may you say that they are heavy! Our lord, Prince Gaucelm, is slain."

"The prince is slain!"

"There has been a great battle, ten leagues from here. . . . My master!" cried the grizzled knight with sombre passion. "The best prince this land has known — Gaucelm the Good!"

Garin knew that the head of Our Lady in Egypt was a sister of the dead prince. No longer was it a day in which, after years and at last, he might ask his question. As it had waited, so must it wait still. He and Rainier rode back to Castel-Noir. The next day, with his troop behind him, he left Foulque, the black tower, and the fir wood, and the next he joined the host of Stephen the Marshal where it lay confronting Montmaure.

CHAPTER XV

SAINT MARTHA'S WELL

THE Princess Audiart crossed the river that made a crescent south and east of the town, — her errand, to see how went the defences on that side. Two stout towers reared themselves there, commanding the river-bank, guarding the bridge-head. Beyond the towers workmen in great numbers deepened a fosse, heaped ramparts, strengthened walls, and in the earth over which Montmaure must advance planted sharpened stakes and all gins and snares that the inventive mind might devise. To hold this bridge was of an importance! — South and east stretched the yet unharried lands and the roads by which must come in food for the town, the roads by which it might keep in touch with the world without, the roads by which might travel succour!

The day was a blaze of light, a dry and parching heat. The river ran with a glitter of diamonds. The stone of the many-arched bridge threw back light. The hill of Roche-de-Frêne, the strong walls, the town within them, the towered, huge church, the castle lifted higher yet, swam in radiance. They lost precision of outline, they seemed lot and part of the daystar's self.

With the princess there rode three or four of her

captains. Clearing the river they must turn their horses aside, out of the way of a multitudinous, approaching traffic that presently, embouching upon the bridge, covered it from parapet to parapet. Noise abounded. A herd of cattle came first, destined, these, for the slope of field and meadow between the stream and the town walls. Wagons followed — many wagons — heaped with provision and drawn by oxen. They held grain in quantity, fodder, cured meat, jars of oil, dried fruit, pease and beans, whatever might be gathered near and far through the land. They came, a long line of them, creaking slow, at the head of the oxen sometimes a man walking, oftener a lad or a woman. They kept the princess and those with her in the glare of the sun. A knight spoke impatiently. "They creep!"

"They creep because they are heavily laden," said the princess. "Let us thank our Lady Fortune that they creep!"

The wagons gave way to a flock of sheep, bleating and jostling each the other. Followed swine with their herd, goats, asses bearing panniers from which fowls looked unhappily forth, carts with bags of meal, a wide miscellany of matters most useful to a town that Montmaure proposed to besiege — with Aquitaine behind him! The princess noted all. The stream flowed by her orders, and her mind appraised the store that was adding itself this morning to the store already gathered in town and castle. She

turned her horse a little and gazed afar over the green and tawny country.

Out of the sheen of the day came from another direction a straggling crowd. Nearer at hand it resolved itself into a peasant horde — a few men neither strong nor weak, but more very aged men, or sick or crippled, many women from young to old, many children. They also had carts, four or five, heaped with strange bits of clothing and household gear. Lying upon these were helpless folk — an old, palsied man, a woman and her day-old babe. They came on with a kind of deep, plaintive murmur, like a wood in a winter blast.

"Ah, Jesu!" said the princess. "More driven folk!"

As they came near she pushed her horse toward them, bent from her saddle, questioned them. They had come from a region where Montmaure was harrying — they had a tale to tell of an attack in the night and a burned village. Unlike many others, these had had time to flee. When they found themselves upon the road, they had said that they would go to Roche-de-Frêne and tell the princess, the prince being dead.

"Aye, aye!" said the princess. "Poor folk — poor orphans!"

She gave them cheering words, then sat as in a dream and watched them faring on across the bridge and up the climbing road to the town gate.

There spoke to her one of her captains, a grey,

redoubtable fighter. "My lady, you are not wise to let them enter! In the old siege your great-grandfather let not in one useless mouth!"

"Aye!" said the princess. "When I was little I heard stories from my nurse of that siege. A great number died without the walls. Men, women, and children died, kneeling and stretching their arms to the shut gates! — That was my great-grandfather. But I will not have my harried folk wailing, kneeling to deaf stone! — Now let us ride to see these barriers."

The day was at the crest of light and heat when with her following she recrossed the bridge, rode up the slope of summer hill, and in at the gate of the town called the river-gate. Everywhere was a movement of people, a buzzing sound of work. The walls of Roche-de-Frêne were strong — but nothing is so strong that it cannot be strengthened! Likewise there were many devices, modern to the age or of an advanced efficiency. The princess had sent for a master-engineer, drawing him with rich gifts to Roche-de-Frêne. The town hummed like a giant hive, forewarned of the strong invader. Prince Gaucelm lay in the cathedral crypt. At night the horizon, north and west, burned red to show the steps of Montmaure. Over there, too, was Stephen the Marshal with a host — though with never so great a host as had Montmaure whom Aquitaine aided. In the high white light and dry heat Roche-de-Frêne, town and castle, toiled busily. The castle

looked to the town, the town looked to the castle. In the town, by the walls, were gathered master-workman and apprentice, not labouring to-day at dyeing and weaving and saddlery, at building higher the church-tower; labouring to-day at thickest shield-making; studying to keep out sack and fire, death and pillage, rape and ruin, studying to keep out Montmaure.

Thibaut Canteleu was mayor, chosen by the town last spring. He made the round of the walls with the princess. "By all showing," said Thibaut, "the walls are greater and stronger than in the old siege."

"Not alone the walls," the princess answered.

"You are right there, my Lady Audiart! We are more folk and stronger. We begin this time," said Thibaut, "well-nourished, and, after a manner of speaking, free. Also, which is a very big thing, liked and liking."

"I would, Thibaut Canteleu, that my father were here!"

"Well, and my lady," said Canteleu, "I think that he is. My father, rest his soul! was a good and a bold man, and, by the rood, I think that he is here — only younger and something added!"

The princess stayed an hour and more by the walls, moving from point to point with the captains and directors of the work. At one place a company of men and women were seated, resting, eating bread, salad, and cheese, drinking a little red wine. She asked for a bit of bread and ate and drank with them.

A child clung to its mother's skirt, hiding its face. "It's the princess — it's the princess — and I have not on my lace cap, mother!"

Audiart smiled down on her. "I like you just as well without!" She talked with the workers, then nodded her head and rode on.

"Aye," said Canteleu beside her. "This is such a tempered town as Julius Cæsar or King Alexander might have been blithe to have about them!"

The princess studied him, walking by the bridle of her white Arabian. "What would you do, Thibaut Canteleu, if I gave you Montmaure for lord?"

Thibaut looked at Roche-de-Frêne spread around them, and then looked at the sky, and then met, frank and full, the princess's eyes with his own black ones.

"What could we do, my Lady Audiart? Begin again, perchance, where we began in your great-grandfather's time. Give us warning ere it happen! So all who love freedom may hang themselves, saving Count Jaufre the trouble!"

"It will not happen," said Audiart. She, too, looked at Roche-de-Frêne, and looked at the sky. When she had made the round of the walls, she rode through the street where the armourers and weapon-makers worked at their trade more busily than in the days of peace, and to the quarter where the fletchers worked, and to the storehouses where was being heaped the incoming grain and other victual. Everywhere reigned activity. Roche-de-Frêne con-

tained not alone its own citizens, together with the castle retainers, the poor knights, the squires, the people of vague feudal standing and their followers whom ordinarily it lodged, but in at the gates now, day by day, rode or walked fighting men. There mustered to the town and the crowning great pile of the castle lords and knights, esquires and mounted men and footmen. Men who owed service came, and in lesser numbers free lances came. And all the great vassals that entered had kneeled in the castle hall, before the Princess Audiart, and putting their hands between hers, had taken her for their liege lady. Where had reigned Gaucelm reigned Audiart.

Each day, before she recrossed the castle moat and went in at the great gate between Red Tower and Lion Tower, she would go for a little time to the cathedral. She rode there now, knights about her. The white Arabian stopped where he was wont to stop. Dismounting, she passed the tremendous, sculptured portal and entered the place.

Within abode a solemn and echoing dimness pointed with light. There were a score of shadowy, kneeling folk, and the lights of the shrines burned. The pillars stood like reeds in a giant elder world. Thin ladders of gold light came down between them. Obeying the princess's gesture, the two or three with her stayed their steps. She went alone to the chapel of Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne. Here, between the Saracen pillars, before the tall, jewelled Queen of

Heaven, before the lamps fed with perfumed oil, lay a great slab of black stone. The Princess Audiart knelt beside it, bowed herself until her forehead felt the coldness. . . .

She bent no long while over Gaucelm the Fortunate, lying still in the crypt below. Sorrow must serve, not rule, in Roche-de-Frêne! Before she rose from her knees and went, she lifted her eyes to the image in blue samite, with the pierced heart and the starry crown. But her own heart and mind spoke to something somewhat larger, more nearly the whole. . . . She quitted the cathedral, and mounting her Arabian, turned with her following toward the castle heaped against the sapphire sky.

Riding that way, she rode by the bishop's palace, and in the flagged place, beside the dolphin fountain, she met Bishop Ugo. He checked his mule by the spraying water, those with him attending at a little distance.

"Well met, my Lord Bishop!" said Audiart. "I have wished to take counsel with you as to these stones. Here are five hundred fit for casting upon Montmaure."

Ugo regarded the fair space between fountain and palace. "Then have them taken up, princess, and borne to the walls." He left the subject. "Has there come any messenger from the host to-day?"

"No. None."

"If there is battle," said Ugo, "I pray the Blessed Mother of God that the right may win!"

He spoke with attempted unction. What was gained was more acid than balm.

The princess had a strange, hovering smile. "How may a man be assured in this world," she asked, "which of two shields is the right knight's?"

Ugo darted a look. "How may a man? — May a woman, then?"

"As much, and as little, as a man," answered the Princess Audiart. "My Lord Bishop, if Count Jaufre strikes down Roche-de-Frêne, will you wed him and me?"

Ugo kept a mask-like face. "I am a man of peace, my Lady Audiart! It becomes such an one to wish that foes were friends, and hands were joined."

With this to think of, the princess rode through the chief street of Roche-de-Frêne, the castle looming nearer and more huge with each pace of the Arabian. Here was the deep moat and the bridge sounding hollowly; here the barbican, Lion Tower and Red Tower. She rode beneath the portcullis, through the resounding, vaulted passage, and in the court the noblest knight helped her from her horse. She was dressed in a dull green stuff, fine and thin, with a blue mantle for need, and about her dark hair a veil twisted turban-wise. Her ladies came to meet her, silken pages and chamberlains stepped backward before her. She asked for Madame Alazais, and learning that she was in the garden, went that way.

Cushions had been piled upon a bank of turf in the shadow of a fruit tree. Here reclined Alazais, beautiful as Eve or Helen, her ladies about her and Gilles de Valence singing a new-old song. Alazais's face was pensive, down-bent, her cheek against her hand — but here in the shade the day was desirable, with air enough to lift away the heat — and Gilles's singing pleased her — and the world and life must be supported! In her fashion she had felt fondness for the dead prince, — felt it now and still, — but yonder was death and here was life. . . . As for war in the land and impending fearful siege, Alazais held that matters might yet be compounded. Until this garden wall were battered in, her imagination would not serve to show her this great castle death-wounded. At the worst, thought Alazais, Audiart might wed Count Jaufre. Men were not so hugely different. . . .

The reigning princess came and sat beside her step-dame. "It is singing and beauty just to be here for a moment under this tree!" She shut her eyes. "To cease from striving and going on! To rest the whole at one point of achieved sweetness, even if it were not very high sweetness — just there — for aye! It would tempt a god. . . ."

The next day she rode westward from the town. Again the day was dry, with an intense and arrowy light. She rode with a small train some distance into the tawny land, to a strong castle that, strongly held, might give Montmaure a check. She rode

here to give wise praise, to speak to those who garrisoned it words of the most courageous expectation. She ate with her train in hall, rested in the cool of the thick-walled room for the hour of extremest heat, spoke again with feeling, wit, and fire to the knights and men-at-arms who must desperately hold the place; then, with her following, said farewell and good-speed. She turned back toward Roche-de-Frêne, through the burned, high summer country.

The sun was in the western heaven. Tall cypresses by the road cast shadows of immense length. There lay ahead a grove of pine and oak, a certain famous cold and bubbling spring, and a meeting with a lesser, winding road. "I am thirsty," said the princess. "Let us draw rein at Saint Martha's Well."

Entering the grove, they found another there before them, athirst and drinking of the well. A knight in a blue surcoat knelt upon the grass beside the water and drank. His shield rested against a tree, he had taken off his helmet and placed it on the grass beside him, a squire held his horse. As the princess and her train came to the well-side he rose, stepped back with a gesture of courtesy. He had in his hand a cup of horn set in silver.

Several of those with the princess dismounted — one spoke to the stranger knight. "Fair sir, we have no cup! If you will be frank with yours —"

Garin stooped again to the water, rinsed and filled the cup, and carried it to the side of the white Arabian. The princess took it, thanked him, and

drank. Her eyes noted, over the rim of the cup, the cross, proclaiming that he had fought in Palestine. Below it, on the breast of his blue surcoat, was embroidered a bird with outstretched wings. She drank, returned the cup and thanked the knight. He was deeply bronzed, taller, wider of shoulder, changed here and changed there from Garin the Squire. In his face sat powers of thought and will that had hardly dwelled there so plainly years ago. She was not aware that she had seen him before. She saw only a goodly knight, and possessing, as she did, wide knowledge of the chivalry within her princedom, wondered whence he had come. She had viewed famed knights from many a land, but she could not recall this traveller with his embroidered bird.

She spoke to him with her forthright graciousness. "Fair sir, are you for Roche-de-Frêne?"

"Aye," said Garin. "I come from the host, bearer of a letter to the princess from my lord Stephen the Marshal. If, lady, you are she —"

"I am Audiart," said the princess, and held out her hand for the letter.

Garin bent his knee, took from his breast the letter wrapped in silk, and gave it. The princess drew off her glove, broke the seal and read, sitting the white Arabian by the murmuring spring. Those with her waited without movement that might disturb. Trees of the grove whispered in the evening air, splashed gold from the sun lay here and there like

fairy wealth. The marshal wrote of ambushments, attacks, repulses, conflicts where Roche-de-Frêne had been victorious. But the two counts were together now, and the odds were great. New men had come to them from Aquitaine. The host was great of spirit, and he, Stephen the Marshal, would do his best. But let none be dismayed if there came some falling back toward the town. So the frank marshal, a good general and truth-teller.

The princess read, sat for a moment with her eyes upon the light falling through the trees, then spoke, giving to her knights the substance of the letter. "So it runs, sirs! So the wheel turns and turns, and no mind can tell — But the mind may be courageous, though it knows not the body's fortunes."

She folded the marshal's letter, put it within her silken purse, and drew on her glove. She spoke to Garin. "How do they call you, sir? Are you man of ours?"

"I am your man, lady. I am Garin, younger brother of Foulque of Castel-Noir, and I am likewise called Garin of the Golden Island."

"Ride beside us to the town," said the princess, "and give tidings of the host."

Garin mounted Noureddin. Rainier bore his helmet and shield. The company left the grove for the open road. The road and all the earth lay in the gold of evening, and in the distance, lifted against the clear sapphire of the east, was Roche-de-Frêne.

Garin rode beside the princess and gave the news of the host. She questioned with keen intelligence, and he answered, it seemed, to her liking.

When she had gained what she wished, she rode for a time in silence, then, "I knew not that Foulque of Castel-Noir had a brother."

"Years ago," said Garin, "I took the cross and went to Palestine. This summer I came home and found the land afire. With two score men I left Castel-Noir, and with them joined the marshal and the host."

"He speaks of you in his letter and gives you high praise. It is Lord Stephen's way to praise justly."

"I would do my devoir," said Garin.

Roche-de-Frêne lay before them. Castle and town and all the country roundabout were bathed by a light golden and intense. "*Garin de l'Isle d'Or,*" said the princess. "There is a troubadour named so — and he sang, too, in the land beyond the sea. Are you he?"

"Yes."

"You sing of one whom you name the *Fair Goal?*"

"Aye, princess," said Garin. "She is my lady."

"Lives she in this land?"

"I know not. I have been in her presence but once — and that was long ago. I think that she lives afar."

"Ah," thought the princess, "behold your poet-lover, straining and longing toward he knows not what nor whom — save that it is afar!" Aloud she

said, "If we are besieged in Roche-de-Frêne brave songs, as well as brave deeds, will have room."

Turning to the south and then to the east they rode by the river and so came to the fosse, ramparts, and towers, guardians of the bridge-head, and then upon the bridge itself. Right and left they saw the gilded water, in front the hill of Roche-de-Frêne, with, for diadem, the strong town walled and towered, and high and higher yet, the mighty castle. The horses' hoofs made a deep sound, then they were away from the bridge and climbing the road to the river-gate. A horn was winded, clear and silver. Now they were riding through the streets, filled with folk. Garin thought of an autumn day, and looked at the tower of the cathedral, higher now than then. . . . The street climbed upward, the castle loomed, vast as a dream in the violet light.

"The castle will give you lodging, sir knight," said the princess.

Here was the moat, across it Red Tower and Lion Tower. Garin looked up at the great blue banner, and then along the battlements to where waved the green of the garden trees. Again there flashed into mind that autumn day, and that he had wondered if ever he would enter here, a knight, and serve his suzerain.

CHAPTER XVI

GARIN AND JAUFRE

With a great host Montmaure encamped before Roche-de-Frêne and overran the champaign half way around. Of the remainder, one fourth was, so to speak, debatable ground, — now the field of the blue banner and now that of the green and silver. The final fourth was stubbornly held by Stephen the Marshal and the host. This gave to the east and included the curve of the river, the bridge and its towers, and the road by which still travelled, from unharried lands, food for the beleaguered town.

Montmaure's tents covered the plain. Off into the deep summer woods fringed the myriad of camp-followers, sutlers, women, thieves, outlawed persons. But the fighting mass showed from the besieged town like a magic and menacing carpet spread half around it, creeping and growing to complete the ring. What was for the time a great army besieged Roche-de-Frêne.

The barons, vassals or allies of Montmaure, had each his quarter where he planted his standard, and whence he led in assault the men who called him lord. The Free Companies pitched among vineyards or where had been vineyards. The spears from Aquitaine and a huge number of bowmen covered

thickly old wheat-fields, pastures, and orchards. Near as might safely be to the walls of Roche-de-Frêne, — so near that the din of the town might be heard, that the alarum bell, when it rang, rocked loud in their ears, — were raised, in the fore-front of tents as numerous as autumn sheaves, the pavilions of Count Savaric and of his son, Count Jaufre. It was August weather, hot and thunderous.

Jaufre de Montmaure came to the door of his pavilion and looked at the hill, the town and castle of Roche-de-Frêne. Behind the three were storm clouds, over them storm light. The banner of the Princess Audiart flew high. Against the grey, heaped vapour it showed like an opening into blue sky.

Each day and every day assaults were made. One was now in progress, directed against the bridge-head, very visible from Jaufre's tent. Aimeric the Bastard led it, and Aimeric was a fierce warrior, followed by men whose only trade was fighting. The atmosphere was still, hushed, grey, and sultry, dulling the noise that was made. The mass of the force was not concerned.

Jaufre stood, tall and red-gold, hawk-nosed, and with a scar across his cheek. He was without armour and lightly clothed, to meet the still heat. Upon the ground without the tent had been spread skins of wild beasts. He spoke over his shoulder, then, moving to these skins, threw himself down upon them. Unconquered town and castle, the present attack

upon the bridge, the slow coming of the storm, the blue, undaunted banner could best be noted just from here. A squire brought a flagon of wine from the tent and set it beside him.

Out of a pavilion fifty yards away came Count Savaric, and crossed the space to his son. With an inner tardiness Jaufre rose from the skins and stood. "I have sent word to Gaultier Cap-du-Loup to take his Company to Aimeric's help," said Count Savaric. He took a seat that they brought him.

Count Jaufre lay down again upon the skins. There held the grey breathlessness and light of the slow-travelling storm.

Count Savaric watched the dust-cloud that hid the bridge-head, obscuring the strong tower and the supporting works that Roche-de-Frêne had built and, with the aid of its encamped host, yet held against all assault.

But Jaufre regarded moodily the walled town and the castle. He spoke. "This tent has stood here a month to-day, and we have buried many knights."

"Just," answered Count Savaric. "Barons and knights and a host of the common people. A great jewel is a costly thing!"

"I miss my comrade, Hugues le Gai. And Richard will not lightly take the loss of Guy of Perpignan."

"Duke Richard knows how jewels cost."

Jaufre waved a sinewy hand toward Roche-de-Frêne. The half-light and the storm in the air edged

his mood. "Well, they will pay!" he said. He lay silent for a minute, then spoke again, but more to himself than to Count Savaric. "Until lately I took that woman yonder —" he jerked a thumb toward the high, distant, blue banner, —"for the mere earth I must take in hand to get the diamond of Roche-de-Frêne! So I had the diamond, the bride that came with it was no great matter. She had no beauty, they said. But, Eye of God! there were other women on earth! They are plentiful. Take this one that went with the diamond, get sons upon her, and let her be silent. . . . Now, I care less for the diamond, I think, than to humble the Princess Audiart!"

Count Savaric, leaning forward, regarded the bridge-end. "Gaultier Cap-du-Loup is there. . . . Ha, they send men to meet him! That may develop —"

The castle loomed against the grey curtain of cloud. The minutiæ of the place appeared to enlarge, intensify. Each detail grew individual, stubborn, a fortress in itself. The whole mocked like the heaped clouds. "Ha, my Lady Audiart!" said Jaufre, "who will not have me for lord — who takes a sword in her hand and fights me —"

He sat up upon the skins, poured himself a cup of wine, and drank.

His father, looking still at the bridge-tower, rose with suddenness to his feet. "The lord of Chalus and his men are going in! There must be yonder half Stephen the Marshal's force! The plain stirs. Ha! best arm —"

Jaufre rose now also. There was a gleam in his eye. "Breath of God!" he said. "I feel to-day like battle!"

His squires armed him. While they worked the trumpets blew, rousing every segment of the camp. Trumpets answered from beyond the bridge. In the town the alarum bell began its deep ringing. The day turned sound and motion. Count Savaric left his tent, mounted a charger that was brought, and spurred to the head of a press of knights. The colours of the plain shifted to the eye; dust hung above the head of the bridge and all the earth thereabouts; out of it came a heavy sound with shouting. The area affected increased; it was evident that there might ensue a considerable, perhaps a general, battle. It was as though a small stir in the air had unexpectedly spread to whirlwind dimensions. And all the time the sky hung moveless, with an iron tint.

They armed Jaufre in chain-mail, put over this a green surcoat worked with black, attached his spurs, laced his helmet, gave him knightly belt and two-edged sword, held the stirrup while he mounted the war horse, gave him shield and spear. He looked a red-gold giant, and he was a bold fighter, and many a man followed him willingly. He shook his spear at the castle, and at the banner waving above the huge donjon. "Ha, Audiart the Wise! Watch now your lord do battle!"

Around the bridge-head, where Stephen the Mar-

shal had his host, the battle sprang into being with an unexpectedness. There had been meant but a heavier than ordinary support to the endangered barriers, a stronger outward push against Aimeric the Bastard and Gaultier Cap-du-Loup. But the tension of the atmosphere, the menace and urge, the storm-light affected alike Roche-de-Frêne and Montmaure. Each side threw forward more men and more. From the bridge-head the shock and clamour ate into the plain. The mêlée deepened and spread. Suddenly, with a trampling and shouting, a lifting of dust to the skies, the whole garment was rent. There arrived, though none had looked for it on this day, general battle. . . . The leaders appeared, barons and famed knights. Here was the marshal, valiant and cool, bestriding a great steed, cheering on his people, wielding himself a strong sword. The battle was over open earth, and among the tents and quarters of the soldiery, and against and from the cover of the works that guarded the bridge. Now it shrieked and thundered in the space between the opposing camps, now among the tents of Roche-de-Frêne and now among those of Montmaure. Banners dipped and fell and rose again, were advanced or withdrawn. There were a huge number of banners, bright-hued, parti-coloured. They showed amid the dust like giant flowers torn from a giant garden and tossed in air. It became a fell struggle, where riderless war horses galloped hither and yon, and the footmen fought hard with pike and sword,

and the crossbowmen sent their bolts, and the archers sent whistling flights of arrows. And still the clouds hung grey, and the town and castle drawn against them watched breathlessly.

Aimar de Panemonde had joined his brother-in-arms. A brave and beautiful knight, he rode in the onset beside Garin of the Golden Island. The two lowered lances and came against two knights of Montmaure. The knights were good knights, but the men from Palestine defeated and unhorsed them. One was hurt to death, the other his people rescued. Garin and Aimar, sweeping forward, met, by a bit of wall, mounted men of a Free Company. . . . The din had grown as frightful as if the world was crashing down. Always Montmaure might remember that Montmaure had in field twice as many as Roche-de-Frêne. Garin and Aimar thrust through the press by the wall, rode with other knights where the fight was fiercest. Garin wished to encounter Jaufre de Montmaure; he searched for the green and silver banner. But there was a wild toss of colours, shifting and indeterminate. Moreover the day, dark before, darkened yet further; it was not possible to see clearly to any distance.

And then, suddenly, a knight was before him, on a great bay horse caparisoned with green picked out with black, the knight himself in a green surcoat. The helmet masked the face, all save the eyes. Each combatant shook a spear and drove against the other, but a wave of battle surging by made the

course not true. The green knight's spear struck the edge of Garin's shield. But the latter's lance, encountering the other's casque, burst the fastening, unhelmed him. Red-gold hair showed, hawk nose, scar across the cheek.

"Ha!" cried Garin. "I know you! Do you, perchance, know me?"

But the battle drove them apart. Here in the press was no longer a knight in green. Garin, looking around, saw only dim struggling forms, knights and footmen. Aimar had been with him, but the waves had borne Aimar, too, to a distance. He lost Rainier also, and his men. Here was the grey, resounding plain beneath the livid sky, and the battle, that, as a whole, went against Roche-de-Frêne. His horse sank under him, cut down by Cap-du-Loup's men. Garin drew his sword, fought afoot. He saw a tossed banner, heard a long trumpet-call, hewed his way where the press was thickest. A riderless horse coming by him, trampling the dead and the hurt that lay thickly, he caught it by the bridle and brought it in time to Stephen the Marshal full in the midst of that seething war. "Gramercy!" cried Stephen, and swung himself into saddle. Roche-de-Frêne rallied, swept toward Montmaure's coloured tents. Overhead the thunder was rolling.

Garin, his back to a heap of stones, fought as he had fought in the land over the sea. A bay horse came his way again. Jaufre de Montmaure, unhelmed, towered above him, sword in hand. Garin's

casque was without visor; his features showed, and in the pallid light his blue surcoat with the bird upon the breast. "Will you leave your horse?" quoth Garin. "It were better chivalry so."

"I meet you the second time to-day. Moreover we encountered a fortnight ago, in the fight by the river. Beside that," said Jaufre, "there is something that comes back to me — but I cannot seize it! Before I slay you, tell me your name."

"Garin of the Golden Island."

Jaufre made a pause. "You are the troubadour?"

"Just."

"So that Richard knows not that I cut you down!" said Jaufre, and struck with his sword.

But not for nothing had Garin trained in the East. The blade that should have bitten deep met an upward glancing blade. The stroke was turned aside. Jaufre made a second and fiercer essay — the sword left his hand, came leaping and clattering upon the heap of stones. "Eye of God!" swore Jaufre and hurled himself from his war horse.

"Take your sword!" said Garin. "And yet once, where I was concerned, you lied, making oath that I struck you from behind and unawares —"

"Who are you with your paynim play? Who are you that I seem to know?"

"I was not knight, but squire — when I tied your hands with your horse's reins!"

A deeper red came to Montmaure's face, the

veins stood out upon his brow, his frame trembled. "Now I remember —! Flame of Hell! You are that insolent whom I sought —"

"I flew from your grasp, and I wintered well in Palestine. — And still you injure women!"

Jaufre lunged with the recovered sword. "I will kill you now —"

"That is as may be," said Garin, and began again the paynim play.

But he was not destined to have to-day Jaufre's death upon him, nor to spill his own life. With shouting and din, through the blackening air, Count Savaric swept this way, a thousand with him. The mêlée became wild, confused and dream-like. Jaufre sprang backward from the sword, like a serpent's darting tongue, of Garin of the Golden Island. The Lord of Chalus pushed a black steed between and with a mace struck Garin down. He sank beside the heap of stones, and for a time lost knowledge of the clanging fight. It went this way and it went that. But the host of Roche-de-Frêne had great odds against it, and faster and faster it lost. . . .

Garin came back to consciousness. Storm-light and failing day, sound as of world ruin, odour of blood, oppression of many bodies in narrow space, faintness of heat — Garin looked upward and saw through a cleft in the battle Roche-de-Frêne upon its hill-top, and the castle grey against the grey heaven, a looming grey dream. He sank again into the sea and night, but when he lifted again, lifted

clear. He opened his eyes and found Aimar beside him, and Rainier.

Aimar bent to him. "What, Garin, Garin! All saints be praised! I thought you dead —"

"I live," said Garin. "But the day is going against us."

He spoke dreamily, and rose to his feet. Before and above him he still saw the grey castle. It lightened, and in a wide picture showed the broken host and the faces of fleeing men. One came by with outspread arms. "Lord Stephen is down — sore hurt or dead! Lord Stephen is down —"

Thunder crashed. Beneath its long reverberations sounded a wailing of trumpets. This died, and there arose a savage shouting, noise of Montmaure's triumph. It lightened and thundered again. Other and many trumpets sounded, not at hand but somewhat distantly, not mournfully, but with voices high and resolved and jubilant. Garin thought that they came from the castle, then that they were blowing in the streets of the town, then that they sounded without the walls, from the downward slope of the great road. Rose came into the grey of the world, salt into its flatness.

"Blessed Mother of God!" cried Aimar. "See yonder, rescue streaming from the gates —"

Forth from Roche-de-Frêne poured the castle garrison, poured the burghers. They came, each man armed as he would run, at the alarum bell, to the walls. Knight and sergeant rode; the many

hasted afoot. All the old warriors and the young warriors, whose post of duty had been within the place, sprang forth, and followed them the host of the townsmen, at their head Thibaut Canteleu. But at the head of all, chivalry, foot-soldiers and townsmen, rode the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne. Down came the torrent, in the light of the storm, down the hill of Roche-de-Frêne, over the bridge, then widened itself and came impetuous, with a kind of singing will, freshness, and power upon the plain, to the battle that the one side had thought won and the other lost.

All lethargy passed from Garin's senses. He beheld the rallying of the host, beheld Stephen the Marshal, sore wounded but not to death, lifted and borne to the great tower, beheld the princess, wearing mail like a man, a helmet upon her head, in her hand a sword. She rode a grey destrier, and where her banner came, came courage, hope, and victory. The battle turned. Montmaure was thrust back upon his tents. When the tempest broke, with a great rain and whistling wind, with lightning that blinded and pealing thunder, when the twilight came down and the battle rested, it was Montmaure that had lost the day.

CHAPTER XVII

OUR LADY OF ROCHE-DE-FRÊNE

STEPHEN the Marshal lay in a fair chamber in the castle of Roche-de-Frêne, very grievously hurt and fevered with his hurt. A physician attended him, and his squires watched, and an old skilled woman, old nurse of the Princess Audiart, sat beside his bed. Sometimes Alazais, with the Lady Guida, came to the room, stood and murmured pitiful words. Through the windows, deep set in the thick wall, entered, through the long day, other sound, not pitiful. At times it came as well in the long night. Montmaure might assault three, four times during the day and, for that he would wear out the defenders, strike again at midnight or ere the cock crew.

Montmaure had so many fighting men that half might rest through the day or sleep at night while their fellows wore down Roche-de-Frêne. Count Jaufre had ridden westward and northward, — after the day of the wounding of Stephen, — and coming to Autafort where was Duke Richard, had procured, after a night of talk and song, dawn mass, and a headlong, sunrise gallop between the hills, the gift of other thousands of men wherewith to pay the cost of the jewel. Normans, Angevins, men of Poitou and Gascony, Englishmen, soldiers of for-

tune, and Free Companions — they followed Jaufre de Montmaure to Roche-de-Frêne and swelled the siege. They were promised great booty, plenary license when the town was sacked, a full meal for the lusts of the flesh.

The host defending Roche-de-Frêne grew smaller, the host grew small and worn. Vigilance that must never cease to be vigilant, attack by day and by night, many slain and many hurt, death and wounding and, at last, disease — and yet the host held the bridge-head and the bridge, made no idle threat against Montmaure, but struck quick and deep. It did what was possible to the heroic that yet was human. . . . There came a day when the entire force of Montmaure thrown, shock upon shock, against the barriers, burst a way in. The strong towers, guardians of the bridge, could no longer stand. The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne must draw a shattered host across the river, up the hill of Roche-de-Frêne, and in at the gates to the shelter of the strong-walled town.

It was done; foot by foot the bridge was surrendered, foot by foot the host brought off. From hillside and wall the archers and the crossbowmen sent their bolts singing through the air, keeping back Montmaure. . . . Company by company, division by division, the gates were passed; when the host was within, they closed with a heavy sound. Gate and gate-towers and curtains of walls high and thick — the armed town, the huge, surmounting castle, looked

four-square defiance to the Counts of Montmaure. Now set in the second stage of this siege.

Montmaure held the roads to and from Roche-de-Frêne. Montmaure lay as close as he might lie and escape crossbow bolts and stones flung by those engines caused to be constructed by men of skill in the princess's pay. From the walls, look which way you might, you saw the coils of Montmaure. He lay glittering, a puissant dragon, impatient to draw his folds nearer, impatient to tighten them around town and castle, strangle, and crush! To hasten that final hour he made daily assay with tooth and claw. Sound of fierce assault and fierce repulse filled great part of time. The periods between of repose, of exhaustion, of waiting had — though men and women went about and spoke and even laughed — the feeling of the silence of the desert, a blank stillness.

The spirit of the town was good — it were faint praise, calling it that! Gaucelm the Fortunate, Audiart the Wise, and their motto and practice, I BUILD, had lifted this princedom and this town, or had given room for proper strength to lift from within. Now Thibaut Canteleu supported the princess in all ways, and the town followed Thibaut. Audiart the Wise and Roche-de-Frêne fought with a single will. And Bishop Ugo made attestation that he wished wholly the welfare of all. He preached in the cathedral; he passed through the town with a train of churchmen and blessed the citizens as they hurried to the walls; he mounted to the castle and

gave his counsel there. The princess listened, then went her way.

Lords, knights, and squires, the chivalry of Roche-de-Frêne, was hers. They liked a woman to be lion-hearted, and they forgot the old name that had been given her. Perhaps it was no longer applicable, perhaps it had never, in any high degree, been applicable. Perhaps there had been some question of fashion, and a beauty not answered to by the eyes of many beholders, a thing of spirit, mind, and rarity. Her vassals, great and less great, gave her devout service; they trusted her, warp and woof. She had a genius and a fire that she breathed into them and that aided to heroic deeds.

Garin of the Golden Island did high things in the siege of Roche-de-Frêne. Where almost all were brave, where each day deeds resounded, he grew to have a name here for exquisiteness of daring as he had had it in the land beyond the sea. . . . He found himself, in one of those periods of stillness between assaults, alone by the watch-tower above the castle garden. He had left Aimar at the barbican, Rainier he had sent upon some errand. It was nearing sunset, and the trees in the garden had an autumn tint. The year wheeled downward.

Garin, mounting the watch-tower, found upon the summit a mantled figure, leaning against the battlement overlooking the wide prospect. A moment, and he saw that it was the princess and would have withdrawn. But Audiart called him back. In the

garden below waited a page and an attendant of whom the princess was fond — the dark-eyed girl who told stories well. But for the rest there held a solitude. She had come from the White Tower to taste this quiet and to look afar, to bathe her senses in this stillness after clamour, and to feel overhead the enemyless expanse.

"You are welcome, Sir Garin of the Golden Island!" she said, and turned toward him. "I watched you lead the sally yesterday. No brave poet ever made men more one with him than you did then —"

Garin came to her side, bent and kissed her mantle edge where her arm brought it against the battlement. "Princess of Roche-de-Frêne!" he said, "watching you, in this war, all men turn brave and poets."

He had spoken as he felt. But, "No!" said the Princess Audiart. "No man turns what he is not." She looked again at the wide prospect. "My heart aches," she said, "because of all the misery! At times I would that I knew —"

She rested her brow upon her hands. The sun touched the mountains, jagged and sharp, shaped long ago by central fires. The castle and town of Roche-de-Frêne were bathed in a golden light. The princess uncovered her eyes. "Well! we travel as we may, or as the inner will doth will. — How long do you think that this castle will go untaken by Montmaure?"

"I think that it will go forever untaken by Montmaure."

"He is strong — he has old strength. . . . But I came to the garden and the watch-tower not to think of that and of how the battle goes. . . . Look at the violet stealing up from the plain."

"In the morning comes the sun once more! I believe in light."

"Yea! so do I." She looked from the cloud-shapes of the western sky to the clear fields of the east and the deeps overhead. Her gaze stayed there a moment, then dropped, a slow sailing bird, to the garden trees below the tower, the late flowers, and the sunburned turf. "The autumn air. . . . I like that — have always liked it. . . . In the hurly-burly of this siege, you think yet of the Fair Goal?"

"Yes, lady."

"Listen to the convent-bells! That is the Convent of Saint Blandina. . . . Pierol, down there, has a lute. I am tired. I would rest for an hour and forget blood and crying voices. I would think of fairer things. I would forget Montmaure. Let us go down under the trees, and I will listen to your singing of your Fair Goal."

They descended the tower-stair and came into the garden. Here was a tall cypress and a seat beneath it for the princess, and a lower one for the singer. Pierol gave the lute, then with the dark-eyed girl drew back into the shade of myrtles. Garin touched the strings, but when he sang it was of love itself.

The Princess Audiart listened, wrapped in her mantle. When the song was ended, "That is of love

itself, and beautiful it was! — Now sing of your own love."

Garin obeyed. When it was done, "That is loveliness!" said the Princess. "This very moment that fair lady has you, doubtless, in her thought."

"She whom I sing, lady, and call the Fair Goal, has never seen me. She knows not that such a man lives."

"What!" exclaimed the princess and turned upon him. "You have seen her once, and she has not seen you at all! You know not her true name nor her home, and she knows not that you are in life! Now, by my faith —"

She broke off, sitting staring at him with a strangely vivid face. "I have heard troubadours sing of such loves," she said slowly, "but I have not believed them. Such loves seemed neither real, nor greatly desirable to be made real. It was to me like other pretences. . . . But you, Sir Garin of the Golden Island, I hold to be honest —"

Garin laid the lute upon the earth beside him. He looked at the trees of the garden, and he seemed to see again a nightingale that flew from shade to shade and sang with a sweetness that ravished. "If I know my own heart," he said, "it loves with reality!" And as he spoke came the first confusion, strangeness, and doubt, the first sense of something new, or added. It was faint — so underneath that only the palest dawn-light of it came over the horizon of the mind — so far and speechless that Garin knew not

what it was, only divined that something was there. Whatever recognition occurred was of something not unpleasing, something that, were it nearer, might be known for wealth. Yet there was an admixture of pain and doubt of himself. He fell silent, faint lines between his brows.

The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne likewise sat without speaking. A colour was in her cheek and her eyes had strange depths. There was softness in them, but also force and will. She looked a being with courage to name her ends to herself and power to reach them.

The dusk was coming, the small winged creatures that harboured in the castle garden were at their vesper chirping. The page Pierol and the dark-eyed girl whispered among the myrtles.

The princess rose. "I am not so tired nor so melancholy now! I thank you for your singing, Sir Garin."

"I would, my princess," answered Garin, "that, like the singers of old, I might build walls where they are broken! I would that, with armèd hand, I might bring you victory!"

"One paladin alone no longer does that," said Audiart. "If we win, we all have part — you and Sir Aimar and Lord Stephen, for whom I grieve, and all the valiant chivalry and those who fight afoot. And Thibaut Canteleu and every brave townsman. And the women who are so brave, ready and constant. And the children who hush their crying. All

have part — all! Account must be taken, too, of my father's jester, who, the other day, penned a cartel to Montmaure. He tied it to an arrow and shot it from the point of highest danger. And it was a scullion who threw down the ladder from the northern wall. All share. The value is in each!"

"And you, my Lady Audiart, have you no part?"

"I take account of myself as well. Yes, I, too, have part."

She turned her face toward the myrtles. "Come, Pierol — Maeut!" then spoke again to Garin of the Golden Island. "It seems to me sad that the Fair Goal, whoever she be, wherever she bides, should know naught of you! Did you perish to-morrow in Roche-de-Frêne, her tears would not flow. If she were laughing, her laughter would not break. No sense of loss where is no sense of possession! This siege never threats her happiness — so little do you know of each other!" Her voice had a faint note of scorn, with something else that could not be read.

"That is true," said Garin, and was once more conscious of that appeal beyond the horizon, under seas. He felt that there had been some birth, and that it was a thing not unsweet or passionless. It seemed other than aught that had come before into his life. And yet, immediately, he saw again and loved again the inaccessible, veiled figure, the traveller from far away, — it had fixed itself in his mind that she was a traveller from far away, — the lady who had been the guest of Our Lady in Egypt!

He loved, he thought, more strongly, if that might be, than before. And again came the note of pain and bewilderment. "It is true, my princess! And still I think that in some hidden way — hidden to her and to me — she knows and answers!" He took the lute from the grass and drew from it a deep and thrilling strain. "So," he said, "is the thought of her among my heart-strings."

The princess drew her mantle about her. "Let us go," she said. "To-night I hold council. There is a thing that must be decided, whether to do it or not to do it."

They left the garden, Maeut and Pierol following.

Garin was not among the barons and the knights in the great hall when the council was held. He might have been so, but he chose absence. The castle was so vast — there were so many buildings within the ring of its wall — that it lodged a host. He, with Aimar, their squires and men-at-arms, had quarters toward the northern face. Here he came, there being a half moon, and all the giant place in black and silver. But he did not enter his lodging or call to Aimar or to Rainier. He went on to where a wooden stair was built against the wall. Here stood a sentinel to whom he gave the word, then, passing, climbed the stair. At the top was space where twenty might stand, and a catapult be worked. Here, too, a soldier kept guard. Garin gave him good-evening, and the man recognized him.

"Sir Garin of the Black Castle, I was behind you

in the sally yesterday! Thumb of Saint Lazarus! yonder was enough to make dead blood leap!"

Garin gave him answer, then crossed to the battlements, and leaning his folded arms upon the stone, looked forth into the night. This angle of the castle turned from the crowded town. The wall was built on sheer rock, and below the rock was the moat; beyond the moat rose scattered houses, and then the ultimate strong wall enclosing all, town and castle alike. And below, on the plain, was Montmaure, islanding Roche-de-Frêne.

The autumn air struck cool. Montmaure had camp-fires flaring here and flaring there, making red-gold blurs in the night. Garin, watching these, came, full-force, upon an awareness of fresh misliking for Montmaure — for Jaufre de Montmaure; misliking so strong that it came close to hatred. He had misliked him before, calling him private no less than public foe. But that feeling had been tame to this.

The inner atmosphere thickened and darkened. Could he have forged material lightning, Jaufre might then have perished. He stood staring at the red flare upon the horizon. His lips moved. "Jaufre, Jaufre! would you have the princess?"

The autumn wind blew against him. Overhead, the moon came out from clouds and blanched the platform where he stood and the long line of the wall. He turned, and looking to the huge castle, saw the rays silver the White Tower. He knew that this was where the princess lived. Hate went out of Garin's

heart and out of his eyes. "What is this," he cried, but not aloud, "what is this that has come to me?"

He stayed a long while on the platform, that was now in light and now in shadow, for the sky had fleets of clouds. But at last he said good-night to the pacing sentinel, and, descending the stair, went to his lodging. Here, before the door, watched one of his own men. "Has Sir Aimar returned, Jean the Talkative?"

"No, lord," said Jean from Castel-Noir. "He sent to find you, but no one knew where — It seems that all the lords and famous knights have been called into hall. Moreover, there are townsmen in the great court, and the mayor is inside with the lords. The bishop came up the hill at supper-time with a long train. There was a monk here, an hour agone, who said that there had been a miracle down there in the cathedral. One Father Eustace, who is very holy, was kneeling before Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne, and he put up his hands to her, like a child to his mother, and he said 'Blessed, Divine Lady, when will Roche-de-Frêne have peace and happiness?' Then, lord, what favour was granted to the holy man! Our Lady's lips opened smilingly, and words came out of them in a sweet and gracious voice, to this effect: 'When those two wed.' Holy Eustace fell in a swoon, so wonderful was the thing, and when he came to went to my lord the bishop. Whereupon —"

But, "Talk less, Jean — talk less!" said Sir Garin, and went by, leaving Jean staring. Within the

house, stretched upon the floor of the great lower room, lay his men asleep. They needed sleep; all in Roche-de-Frêne knew the strain of watching overtime, of fighting by day and by night. Two only whispered in a corner, by a guttering candle. These springing up as Garin entered proved to be Rainier and the younger squire of Aimar, the elder being with his master. "Stay till I call you," said Garin to Rainier, and passing between the slumbering forms, ascended the stair to the chamber above. Here, before a small window was drawn a bench. He sat down, and looked forth at the moon passing from cloud to cloud.

Eight years ago he, like Father Eustace, had knelt before Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne and asked for a sign. . . . Of his age, inevitably, in a long range of concerns, Garin had not formerly questioned miracles. They occurred all the time, sworn to by Holy Church. But now, and passionately enough, he doubted that Father Eustace lied.

Here, sometime later, Aimar found him. "Why did you not come to the hall? Saint Michael! It had been worth your while!"

"I know not why I did not come. . . . I have been on the walls — I think that I have been struck by the moon. . . . What was done in hall?"

Aimar stood beside him. "This princess — I have not seen another like her in the world!"

"She came from fairy-land and the wise saints' land and the bravest future land. — What was done?"

"Have you heard of the miracle of Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne?"

"I have heard of it. I do not believe it."

"Speak low!" said Aimar. "Bishop Ugo related it with eloquent lips."

"Bishop Ugo is Montmaure's man."

"Speak lower yet! . . . Perchance he thinks that Montmaure is his man."

"Perchance he does. Let them be each other's. What was answered?"

"The princess rose and spoke. She said that there were so many twos in the world that we must remain in doubt as to what two the Blessed Image meant."

"Ha!" cried Garin, and laughed out.

"So," said Aimar, "did we all — barons, knights, and no less a soul than Thibaut Canteleu. But the bishop looked darkly."

"No doubt Father Eustace will presently be vouchsafed an explanation! — Light wed darkness, and Heaven approve! — Ha! what then, is Heaven?"

"But then Ugo became smooth and fine, and wove a sweet garland of words for the wise princess. And so, for this time, that passed. — Came that which the council had been called to judge of. Heralds from Montmaure, appearing this morning before the river-gate, asking for parley, were blindfolded and brought to her in hall."

Garin turned. "What said Jaufre de Montmaure?"

"What is wrong with you, Garin of the Golden

Island? Heaven forfend your sickening with the fever! — Montmaure offers a truce from sunrise to sunrise, offers, moreover, to pitch pavilions two bow shots from the walls. Then, saith the two of him, — or rather saith Jaufre with a supporter signed by Count Savaric, — then let this be done! Let the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne, followed by fifty knights, and Count Jaufre de Montmaure, followed by fifty, meet with courtesy and festival before these pavilions — the end, the coming face to face, the touching hands, the speaking together of two who never yet have had that fortune. So, perchance, a different music might arise!"

"How might that be? Her soul does not accord with his." Garin left the window, paced the room, came back to the flooding moonlight. "What said the princess?"

"She gave to all in hall the words of the heralds and asked for counsel. Then this baron spoke and that knight and also Thibaut Canteleu, and they spoke like valiant folk, one advising this course and one that. And Bishop Ugo spoke. Then the princess stood up, thanked all and gave decision."

"She will take her knights, and with courtesy and festival she will meet and touch hands and speak with Jaufre, there by his pavilions?"

"Just," said Aimar. . . . "Do you know, Garin, that when you make poems of the Fair Goal, you make men see a lady not unlike the princess of this land?"

CHAPTER XVIII

COUNT JAUFRE

THE day was soft and bright, neither hot nor cold, and at the mid-morning. Half-way between the walls of Roche-de-Frêne and the host of Montmaure, in a space clear of any cover that might be used for ambushes, rose a blue pavilion, a green and silver pavilion, and one between that carried these colours blended. Before the blue pavilion hung a banner with a blue field and the arms of Roche-de-Frêne, before the green and silver Montmaure's banner; before the third pavilion the two ensigns were fixed side by side. Those who had pitched the pavilions and made lavish preparation were servants of Montmaure. Montmaure was the host this day. Led blindfold into Roche-de-Frêne, through the streets and in at the castle gate, had gone four great barons, hostages for the green and silver's faith.

A trumpet sounded from the town. A trumpet answered for Montmaure. The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne rode through the gates upon her white Arabian. Behind her came two ladies, Guida and Maeut, and after these rode fifty knights. All wound down the hillside that was pitted and scarred and strewn with many a battle token. To meet them, started from the tented plain fifty knights of Mont-

maure, and at their head Count Jaufre. Count Savaric, it was known, suffered yet at times with the wound he had got in the spring from Stephen the Marshal. It seemed that it was so in the week of this meeting. He was laid in his tent in the hands of his leech. But by cry of herald he had made known that his son's voice and presence were his own. The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne would meet in Count Jaufre no less a figure than the reigning count. Thus Jaufre rode alone at the head of the fifty knights.

He rode a great steed caparisoned as for a royal tourney. He himself wore mail beneath a surcoat of the richest samite, but he had embroidered gloves, not battle gauntlets, and in place of helmet a cap sewn with gems and carrying an eagle feather. The one train came down the hill, the other crossed the level, overburned, and trodden earth. The two met with fanfare of trumpets and caracoling of steeds and chivalrous parade, close at hand the coloured pavilions, overhead the sapphire sky, around the breath of autumn.

Jaufre sprang from his courser, hastened to the Arabian and would aid the princess to dismount. He swept his cap from his head. Red-gold locks and hawk nose, and on the right cheek a long scar, curiously shaped. . . . The Princess Audiart sat very still upon her white Arabian. Then she smiled, dismounted, and gave Jaufre de Montmaure her gloved hand.

Jaufre was adept, when he so chose, in *courtoisie.* He had learned the value and the practice of it in Italy, and learned, in his fellowship with Richard Lion-Heart, to temper it with the cool snow of exaltation and poetry — or to seem to temper it. Richard truly did so. To-day this one acre of earth was a court, and he was prepared to behave to the ruler of Roche-de-Frêne as to a fair woman who chanced to be high-born. All the past fighting should be treated with disdain as a lovers' quarrel! Count Jaufre had chosen a rôle, and practised it in his mind, with a smile upon his lips. He did not forget, nor did he wish the princess to forget, how much stronger was the host of Montmaure, and that the siege must end in humbling for Roche-de-Frêne and victory for Montmaure. Male strength — male strength was his! He was prepared to show his consciousness of that. He had had lovers' quarrels before — he could not remember how many. He remembered with complacence that — usually — the other side had come to its knees. If the other side had given him much trouble, made him angry, he then repaid it. That was what was going to happen here. But, to-day, joy and courtesies and the *gai science!* Show this Audiart the Wise the lord she thought she could refuse! So he met the princess, curled, pressed, and panoplied with courtliness. He out-poetized the poets, beggared the goddesses of attributes. He strewed painted flowers before the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne, then, his count's cap

again upon his head, led her over the battle-cleansed space to the three pavilions.

Her ladies followed her. The hundred knights, dismounting, fraternized. The air was sweet; over high-built town and castle, sweep of martial plain, cloud-like blue mountains, sprang a serenest roof of heaven. The knights gave mutual enmity a day's holiday, and, having done a good deed, gained thereupon a line in stature. Many of them knew one another, name and appearance and fame. They had encountered in tourney, in hall and bower, and in battle. Fortune had at times ranged them on the same side. A fair number wore the sign of the crusader. Under either banner were famous knights. The time craved fame and worshipped it. War, love, song, and — the counter-pole — asceticism were your trodden roads to fame. Now and then one reached it by a path just perceptible in the wilderness; but more fell in striving to make such a path. There were famous knights among the hundred, and by this time none more famed than Garin of Castel-Noir, Garin of the Golden Island. Sir Aimar de Panemonde was as brave, but Garin was troubadour no less than knight, and about what he did, in either way, dwelt a haunting magic.

Montmaure led the princess to the blue pavilion. It was hers, with her ladies, to refresh herself therein. He himself crossed to the green and silver, drank wine, and looked forth upon the mingling of knights. "Let us see," ran his thought, "the jade's choice!"

He saw valiant men, known afar, or come in this siege to their kind's admiration. "Ha!" he said to Guiraut of the Vale who stood beside him. "She knows how to cull her garden!" .

"She has more mind, lord, than a woman should have!"

He thought to please Count Jaufre, what he said differing not at all from what he had heard his lord say. But Jaufre frowned. Reckoning the princess his own, it was not for a vassal to speak slightingly! A shifting of the knights took place. It brought into view one whom Montmaure had not earlier seen. "Eye of God! will she bring that devil with her?"

Guiraut followed the pointing finger. "That is the crusader and troubadour, Garin de Castel-Noir."

"Devil and double-devil!" burst forth Jaufre. "When I take Roche-de-Frêne, woe to you, devil! I hope you be not slain before that day!"

The blood was in his face, his eyes narrowed to a slit, his red-gold locks seemed to quiver. Another movement of knights in the giant cluster, and Garin was hid from his sight. He turned and drank again, with an effort composed his countenance and, a signal being given, left his pavilion. At the same moment the princess quitted the blue; they came together to the great pavilion of the blended colours and the two banners. Here, beneath a canopy, were chairs, with a rich carpet for the feet. Jaufre had provided music, which played, — not loudly, nor so as to trouble their parley.

The princess had a robe of brown samite, with a mantle of the same; but over the robe, in place of silken bliaut, she wore fine chain-mail, and in a knight's belt of worked leather, a rich dagger. Her braided hair was fastened close, with silver pins, beneath a light morion. She sat down, looked at Jaufre opposite. "In this war, my lord, we have not met so near before."

"Never have we met, princess, so near before!" He bent toward her, warm, red-gold, and mighty. This meeting was for condescension, grace, spring touches in autumn! He found her face not so bad, better much than long-ago rumour had painted. His memory carried pictures of her in this siege — upon her war horse before the bridge was taken, or in sallies from the gates, in a night-time surprise, by the flare of torches, or upon the walls, above the storming parties. But he had seen her somewhat distantly, never so close as this. That was the inward reason why he had urged this meeting: he wished to see her close. He felt the stirring of a thwart desire. He wished to embrace — since that was what she refused — and to crush. He could admire the courage in her — he had courage himself, though little did he know of magnanimity. "We should have met," he said, "before we went to war!"

Audiart regarded him with a stilly look. "Perhaps, my lord, we should have warred where'er we met. — It has been eight years since you came from Italy."

"Eight years. — Eye of God! they have been full years!"

"Yes. Each has been an ocean. I remember, it was near this season."

Jaufre's brows bore a marking of surprise. "Tell me why you hold that year in memory —"

The princess sat with a faint smile upon her face, her eyes upon the world beyond the canopy. The latter stretched but overhead; the hillside, the town, the tented plain were visible, and in the foreground the company of knights where they were gathered beneath olive and almond trees.

"That year, my lord count, I first saw your father, the 'great count.' The prince my father made a tourney in honour of a guest who, like you, my lord, sought a bride. And by chance there came riding by Roche-de-Frêne — that you must know, my lord, gave always frank welcome to neighbours — Count Savaric of Montmaure. My father gave him good welcome, and also my step-dame, Madame Alazais, and myself, and he sat with us and watched the knights joust. . . . There is where you come in, my lord! One asked why you were not with Count Savaric, for it was known that you had lately come back to Montmaure from Italy." She turned her eyes upon him and smiled again. "I remember almost Count Savaric's words! 'My son,' he said, 'would go a-hunting! Giving chase to a doe, he outstripped his men. Then burst from a thicket a young wolf which attacked him and tore his side.

He cannot yet sit his horse. I have left him at Montmaure where he studies chivalry, and makes, I doubt not, chansons for princesses.'"

The blood flooded Montmaure's brow and cheek. He stared, not at the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne, but forth upon the train of knights. "Eye of God!" he breathed. "That wolf —! Eye of God!"

"My lord count," said the princess, "did you afterwards hunt down and kill the wolf? I never heard — and I have always wished to hear."

"No! He ran free! Heart of Mahound —!"

Light played over the princess's face, but Jaufre, choking down the thought of the wolf, did not note it. He opened his lips to speak further of that eight-years-past autumn, thus brought up by chance, and of the wolf; then thought better of it. As for Audiart, she thought, "Vengeful so toward a poor squire who but once, and long ago, crossed his evil will! Then what might Roche-de-Frêne hope for?"

Jaufre, regaining command of himself, signalled for wine. A page brought rich flagons upon a rich salver. Jaufre filled a cup, touched it with his lips, offered it to the princess. He was growing cool again, assured as before. There was flattery, in her recalling the moment of his return from Italy, in her remembering, across the years, each word that had been spoken of him!

She took the cup — he noted how long and finely shaped were the fingers that closed upon it — and drank, then, smiling, set it down. "That is a

generous wine, my lord — a wine for good neighbours!"

"It is not a wine of Montmaure but of Roche-de-Frêne," said Jaufre. "Save indeed that, as I have taken the fields that grew the grapes and the town that sold the wine, it may be said, princess, to be of Montmaure!"

Audiart the Wise sat silent a moment, her eyes upon her foe. She was there because the need of Roche-de-Frêne sucked at her heart. But she knew — she knew — that it would not avail! Yet she spoke, low, deep and thrillingly. "My lord, my lord, why should we fight? Truth my witness, if ever I wished Montmaure harm, I'll now unwish it! Do you so, my lord, toward Roche-de-Frêne! This sunny, autumn day — if we were at peace, how sweet it were! This land garlanded, and Montmaure — and men and women faring upward — and anger, hate, and greed denied — and common good grown dearer, nearer! Ah, my Lord Count Jaufre, lift this siege, and win a knightlier, lordlier name than warring gives —"

Jaufre broke in. "Are marriage bells ringing in your pleading, my princess? If they ring not, all that is said says naught!"

She looked at him with a steadfast face. "Marriage bells? . . . Give me all that is in your mind, my lord."

Jaufre drank again. "Marriage bells ringing over our heads where we stand in the Church of Saint Eustace in Montmaure."

"*In Montmaure.* . . . Did you and I wed, my lord, I must come to you in Montmaure?"

"So! I will give you escort — a thousand spears."

"And Roche-de-Frêne?—and Roche-de-Frêne—"

"As I may conceive," said Jaufre, "dealing with my own."

The princess sat very still. Only her eyes moved, and they looked from Count Jaufre to the walled town and back again. Montmaure had pushed back his seat. He sat propping his chin with his hand, his hot gaze upon her. "Roche-de-Frêne," she said at last,—"Roche-de-Frêne would have no guaranty?"

"Eye of God!" answered Jaufre. "I will not utterly destroy what comes to me in wedlock! What interest would that serve? It shall feel scourges, but I shall not tumble each stone from its fellow! Take that assurance, princess!"

She sat silent. "After all," said her thought, "you have only what you knew you would get!" Within she knew grim laughter, even a certain relief. Would she sacrifice or would she not, no good would come from Montmaure to Roche-de-Frêne! Then, fight on, and since thus it was, fight with an undivided will! Resistance rose as from sleep, refreshed. She smiled. "I am glad that I came, my Lord of Montmaure," she said, and spoke in a pure, limpid, uncoloured voice. "Else, hearing from another your will, I might not have believed—"

"Eye of God! Madame, so it is!" said Jaufre, and

in mind heard the bells of the Church of Saint Eustace, and the shouting in Montmaure.

The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne stood up in her brown samite, and sheath of chain-mail and morion that reflected the sunbeams. "Having now your mind, my lord count, I will return to Roche-de-Frêne!"

She signed to her train that was watching. The squires brought before the pavilion her white Arabian and the palfreys of Guida and Maeut. The movement spread to the knights beneath the trees. . . . Jaufre, rising also, inwardly turned over the matter of how soon she had willed to depart, to bring short this splendidly-prepared-for visit. That she would be gone from him and any further entertainment displeased, but was salved by the thought that she was in flight to conceal her lowered and broken pride. He was conscious that he had not maintained his intention of suavity, *courtoisie*. When Richard was not there, he did not well keep down the pure savage. That talk of hers of the "wolf" had poured oil on the red embers of a score unpaid. That the wolf was there in presence — that he, Jaufre, did not wish to tell as much to the world and Audiart the Wise, letting them see what score had gone unpaid — increased the heat. It burned within Jaufre with a smouldering that threatened flame. On the other hand, the person of this princess pleased him more than he had looked for. And it was delightsome to him, the taste of having made her taste him, his

power, purpose, and mode of dealing! He felt that longer stay would accomplish no more; he was not without a dash of the artist. He, too, signed for his great bay — for his knights to prepare to follow him from these gay pavilions. To-morrow morn this truce would shut — unless, ere that, she sent a herald with her plain surrender!

She was speaking, in the same crystal, uncoloured voice. "Are you so sure, my lord, that you win? Do you always win? What were we talking of at first? A doe that escaped from under your hand, and a wolf that laid you low in a forest glade and went his way in safety? — My Lord of Montmaure, I defy you! and sooner than wed with you I with this dagger will marry Death!" She touched it where it hung at her belt, moved to her Arabian, and sprang to the saddle.

Her following, though but a few had heard what passed between her and Montmaure, saw that there was white wrath, and that the meeting was shortened beyond expectation. Montmaure's knights marked him no less — that suddenly his mood was black. All of either banner got to horse.

The veins of Jaufre's brow were swollen. The company of knights forming about the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne, the "wolf" came suddenly into his field of vision. . . . The "singing knight" placed in her chosen band by Roche-de-Frêne's princess — the "wolf" protected by her and favoured! Till that instant he had not thought of them together —

but now with lightning swiftness his fury forged a red link between them. He did not reason — certainly he gave her no place in the forest, eight years agone — but he desired, he lusted to slay the one before the eyes of the other! He thrust out a clenched hand, he spoke with a thickened voice. Whatever in him had note of a saving quality was passed by the stride of its opposite.

"Ha, my Princess Audiart, that men call the Wise! I will tell you that your wisdom will not save you — nor Roche-de-Frêne — nor yonder knight, my foe, that I hold in loathing and will yet break upon a wheel!" He laughed, sitting his great bay horse, and with a gesture shook forth vengeance. "To-morrow morn, look to yourselves!"

"My Lord of Montmaure, we shall!" The princess gave command, the train from Roche-de-Frêne drew away from the pavilions, the knights of Montmaure and Count Jaufre. "Farewell, my lord!" cried Audiart the Wise, "and for hospitality and frank speech much thanks! I love not war, but, if you will have it so, I will war!"

The trumpets sounded. They who watched from the walls saw the two trains draw apart and their own come in order up the winding road that climbed to the town. Their own reached the gates and entered. . . . In the market-place, the bell having drawn the people together, the princess spoke to them, her voice, clear, firm, and with hint of depth beyond depth, reaching the outermost fringing sort.

She spoke at no great length but to the purpose, then asked their mind and waited to hear it.

Raimon, Lord of Les Arbres, a great baron, the greatest vassal of Roche-de-Frêne there present, spoke from the train of fifty, speaking for those lords and knights and for all chivalry in Roche-de-Frêne. "My Lady Audiart, we are your men! Hold your courage and we shall hold ours! There is not here lord nor belted knight nor esquire who wishes for suzerain the Counts of Montmaure! We will keep Roche-de-Frêne until we know victory or perish!"

The captain of the crossbowmen, a giant of a man, spoke with a booming voice. "The sergeants, the bowmen, the workers of the machines and the foot-soldiers sing Amen! The princess is a good princess and a noble and a wise, and no man here fails of his pay! Montmaure is a niggard and a hard lord. We are yours to the end, my Lady Audiart!"

Thibaut Canteleu spoke for the town. "Since the world will have it that we must have lords, give us your like for lord, my Lady Audiart! We know what a taken and sacked town is when Montmaure takes and sacks it! But open our gates to him at his call, and what better would we get? Long slavery and slow pain, and our children to begin again at the foot of the stair! So we propose to hold this town, how hard it is to hold soever!"

A clerk, standing upon the steps that led to a house door, sent his voice across the crowded place. "I will speak though I be excommunicate for it!

We hear of the miracle of Father Eustace, and one tells us that God and His Mother would have our princess marry Montmaure! I do not believe that Father Eustace knows the will of God!"

From the throng came a deep, answering note, a multitudinous humming doubt if Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne had been truly understood. The people looked at the cathedral tower, and they looked at the castle and around at their town, their houses, shops, market, and guild-halls, at the blue sky above and at their princess. The note sustained itself, broadened and deepened, became like the sound of the sea, and said forthright that whatever had been meant by Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne, it was not alliance with Montmaure!

The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne and her train of knights rode through the town and mounted to the castle. Some change in the order of those about her brought Garin for a moment beside the white Arabian. The princess turned her head, spoke to him. "Count Jaufre holds you in some especial hatred. Why is that?"

"I crossed him in his will one day, long ago. He would have done an evil thing, and I, chancing by, came between him and his prey. He it was who caused me to flee the land. — But not alone for that day is there enmity between us!"

"Ah!" said the princess. "Long is his rosary of ill deeds! Into my mind to-day comes one that was long ago, and on a day like this. It comes so clear—!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE SIEGE

MONTMAURE had wooden towers drawn even with the walls of Roche-de-Frêne. From the tower-heads they strove to throw bridges across, grapple them to the battlements, send over them — a continuing stream — the starkest fighters, beat down the wall's defenders, send the stream leaping down into the town itself. Elsewhere, under cover of huge shielding structures, Montmaure mined, burrowing in the earth beneath the opposed defences, striving to bring stone and mortar down in ruin, make a breach whereby to enter. Montmaure had Greek fire, and engines of power to cast the flaming stuff into the town. He had great catapults which sent stones with something of the force of cannon-balls, and battering rams which shook the city gates. He had archers and crossbowmen who from high-built platforms sent their shafts in a level flight against the men of Roche-de-Frêne upon the walls. He had a huge host to throw against the town — men of Montmaure, men, a great number, given by Duke Richard. He had enough to fight and to watch, and to spare from fighting and watching. He ravaged the country and had food.

Roche-de-Frêne fought with the wooden towers,

threw down the grappling hooks and the bridges, thrust the stream back, broken and shattered into spray. It sallied forth against those who mined, beat down and set afire the shielding structures, drove from the field the sappers at the walls. It had some store of Greek fire and used it; it had engines of power and great catapults that sent stones with something of the force of cannon-balls against those towers and scaffolds of the foe. Roche-de-Frêne had archers and crossbowmen, none better, who from walls and gate-towers sent shafts in level flights against the high platforms, and in slant lines against Montmaure attacking in mass, against men upon scaling ladders. It had men whose trade was war, knight and squire, sergeant and footman, lord and Free Companion, — and men whose trade was not war, but who now turned warrior, burghers fighting for their liberties, their home and their work. But it had not the numbers that had Montmaure. It knew double-tides of fighting and watching. It had deep wells and an immemorially strong-flowing spring. But food was failing — failing fast! It had heroism of man, woman, and child. But hunger and watching and battle at last must wear the highest spirit down, or if not the spirit, the body with which it is clothed.

It was late, late autumn — Saint Martin's summer. The days that had passed since that short truce and meeting with Montmaure had laid shadows beneath the eyes of the Princess Audiart. . . .

To-day had seen heavy fighting and slaughter. Now it was night, and Audiart in the White Tower knelt within the window and looked forth upon the castle buildings, courts, towers, and walls, and upon the roofs of the town, and the cathedral tower, and further to where showed red light of Montmaure's vast encampment. She had been, through the day, upon the walls. . . . Her head sank upon her arms. "Jesu, and Mother Mary, and whoever is pitiful, I, too, am weary of slaughter! A better way — a better way —"

She stayed so for some minutes; then, lifting her head, gazed again into the night. "Who has the key?" she said. "Duke Richard has the key." Presently she stood up, rested hands upon the stone sill, drew a deep breath. Her lips parted, her glance swept the wide prospect, then lifted to the stars. "If I have wit enough and courage enough — that might be —" A colour crept into her face. "Was never a right way seemed not at first most hazardous and strange — so much more used are we to the wrong ways!"

She looked at the clusters of stars, she looked at the town below that seemed to sigh in its restless and troubled sleep, she looked at the dimly seen, far mountains behind which sank the stars. The cool autumn air touched her brow. "Where all is desperate, be more desperate — and pass!" She stretched out her hand to the night. "I will do it!"

Morning broke, a sky of rose and pearl over

Roche-de-Frêne. The sun rose, and the rays came into the chamber where was being nursed back to life and strength Stephen the Marshal. Each day now saw improvement; as the year ebbed, the vital force in him gained. Gaunt and spectre-pale, he yet left his bed each day; arm over his squire's shoulder, walked slowly to a great chair by the window, sat there wrapped in a furred robe, and listened to the ocean of sound that now was Roche-de-Frêne. Sometimes the ocean had only a murmuring voice, and sometimes for long hours it raged in storm. Stephen prayed for patience and from minute to minute sent page and squire for news. This morn dawned in quiet; yesterday, all day there had been storm. The sun gilded the court beneath and the chapel front, built at angles with the great pile in which he was lodged. He could hear the chanting of the mass. That was ended, the sunshine strengthened, somewhere a trumpet was blown. Stephen prayed again for patience, and despatched his squire Bertran for authentic tidings. Bertran went, but presently returned, having met without a page sent by the princess. She would know of Lord Stephen's health this morn, and if he felt strength for a visit from her and some talk of importance. Stephen sent answer that he wished for no greater cordial.

Audiart came, with her Maeut, who, with the squires and the old nurse, waited in a small anteroom. That which the princess had to say wanted

no auditors other than those whom she chose — and for this matter she would choose but few. Stephen, gaunt and drained of blood, stood to greet her, would not sit until she had taken the chair they had placed.

She looked at him very kindly. "Lord Stephen, much would I give to see the old Stephen here —"

"Ah, God, madam!" said Stephen, "not here would you see him, but out there where they fight for Roche-de-Frêne."

"Aye, that is true!"

"I shall soon be there, my Lady Audiart — a log here no longer!"

"Maître Arnaut tells me that. I talked with him before coming here. He says that yet a few days, and you might take command."

"As I will, princess, if you give it me — But no man lives who can better your leading!"

"My leading or another's, Stephen, our case is desperate. The deer feels the breath of the hounds. . . . Now listen to me, and let not strangeness startle your mind. At the brink of no further going, then it is that we fare forth and go further!"

The sun rode higher by an hour before she left Stephen the Marshal. She left him a flushed, half-greatly-rallied, half-foreboding man, but one wholly servant of her and of Roche-de-Frêne's great need, — one, too, who could follow mind with mind, and accept daring, when daring promised results, with simplicity.

From this chamber she went to the castle-hall and found there, awaiting her, Thibaut Canteleu, for whom she had sent. She took him upon the dais, her attendants clustering at the lower end of the hall, out of hearing.

"Thibaut," she said, "there is good hope that in a week Lord Stephen may take again his generalship."

"I am glad, my lady," answered Thibaut, "for Lord Stephen, for 't is weary lying ill in time of war. But we have had as good a general!"

"That is as may be . . . . Thibaut, do you see victory for Roche-de-Frêne?"

Thibaut uttered a short groan. "My Lady Audiart, the road is dark —"

"I think that if we strain to the uttermost we may hold out yet two months."

"Montmaure could never do it, but for Duke Richard's men!"

"Just. . . . Thibaut, Thibaut, now listen to me, and when you have heard, speak not loudly! If this is done, it must slip through in silence."

She spoke on for some moments, her voice low but full of expression, her eyes upon the mayor. She ended, "And I well believe that you can and will hold the town until there is seen what comes —"

Thibaut drew a deep breath. "My Lady Audiart, trust us, we will!" His black eyes snapped, a laugh passed like a wave across his face that grew ruddier. "By Peter and Paul! Now and again in life I my-

self have come to places where I must see further than my fellows and dig deeper, or they and I would perish! — This is a bold thing that you propose, my lady, and may go to the left instead of the right! Aye! without doubt Faint-Heart would say, 'You follow marsh-fire and trust weight to a straw!'"

"Yes. . . . In the story of things what seemed a beam has been found to be a straw, and what seemed a straw a beam. May it be so this time! . . . Now what we have talked of rests until Lord Stephen takes command."

A week of days and nights went by, filled with a bitter fighting. But Stephen the Marshal grew stronger, like the old iron soldier and good general that he was. Arrived an evening when he came into hall, walking without help, and though gaunt and pale so nearly himself that all rejoiced. The next day he mounted horse and rode beside the princess through the town to the eastern gate where was now the fiercest fighting. The knights, the men-at-arms and citizens cried him welcome. That night Audiart held full council. When morning came it was heralded through Roche-de-Frêne that the princess had made Lord Stephen general again.

Audiart listened to the trumpets, then with Maeut she went into the castle garden and found there Alazais and Guida. She sat beside Alazais beneath a tree whereon hung yet the gold leaves, and taking her step-dame's hand, caressed it. "Come siege, go siege!" she said, "you rest so beauteous —!"

"Audiart! Audiart! when is anxiousness, misery, and fear going to end? And now they say that you command that every table alike be given less of food —"

The princess stroked the other's wrist, smiling upon her. "You know that you do not wish bread taken from another to be laid in your hand!"

"No, I do not wish that, but —" The tears fell from Alazais's eyes. "What have we done that the world should turn so black?"

"Be of cheer!" said Audiart. "The black may lighten!" She laughed at her step-dame, and at Guida's melancholy look. "In these earthy ways loss has its boundary stone no less than gain! Who knows but that to-day we turn? — Come close, Guida and Maeut, for I have something to say to you three, and want no other — no, not a sparrow — to hear me!" She spoke on, in a low voice, with occasionally an aiding gesture, Maeut kindling quickly, the other two incredulous, objecting, resisting, then, at last, catching, too, at the straw. . . .

That morning Montmaure did not push to the assault. Viewed from the walls, it seemed that the two counts made changes in the disposition of the besieging host. Here battalions were drawing closer, here spreading fan-wise.

Invest as closely as Montmaure might, Roche-de-Frêne had gotten out now a man and now a man, with a cry for aid to the King of France, to Toulouse and others. One had returned with King Philip's

assurance that he would aid if he could, but harassed by revolts nearer Paris, could not. Other messengers had made no return. . . .

To-day there seemed a redrawing of the investing lines, a lifting and pitching afresh of encampments. Roche-de-Frêne, beginning to know hunger, saw, too, long forage trains come laden to its enemy. Watching, Roche-de-Frêne thought justly that Montmaure might be meaning to rest for a time from assaults in which he lost heavily, heavily — to rest from assaults and lean upon starvation of his foe. Famine, famine was his ally — famine and Aquitaine! It was the last that made him able to serve himself with the first.

Garin, going toward the castle from the town's eastern gate, heard in the high street the trumpet and the cadenced notice that Stephen the Marshal, healed of his wound, again commanded for the princess. The people cried, "Long live the princess! Long live the marshal!" then, silent or in talk, turned to the many-headed business of the day. In front of Garin rose the great mass of the cathedral, wonderful against the November sky.

As he came into the place before it, there met him Pierol, the trusted page of the princess. "Sir Garin de Castel-Noir, I was sent in search of you! The princess wishes to speak with you — No, not this hour! Two hours from now, within the White Tower."

He was gone. "Go you, also," said Garin to the

squire Rainier. "Or wait for me here by the door. I will spend in the church one hour of those two."

He went from out the autumn sunshine into the dusk of the huge interior. An altar-lamp burned, a star, and light in long shafts fell from the jewel-hued windows. The pillars soared and upheld the glorious roof, and all beneath was rich, dim and solemn. A few figures knelt or stood in nave or aisle. Garin moved to where he could see the columns brought by Gaucelm of the Star from the land beyond the sea and set before the chapel of Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne. He knelt, then, crossing himself, rose and took his seat at the base of a great supporting pillar. He rested his arm upon his knee, his chin upon his hand, and studied the pavement. He had not passed the columns and knelt before the Virgin of Roche-de-Frêne, because in his heart was an impulse of hostility. He did not name it, made haste to force it into limbo, hastened to bow his head and murmur an *Ave Maria*. Nevertheless it had made itself felt. This was the gemmed, azure-clad Queen who wanted marriage between Montmaure and the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne! . . . But doubtless it was not she — Father Eustace had slandered her — a lying monk, Heaven knew, was no such rarity! Garin came back into her court, but still he did not kneel, and, stretching his arms to her, beg her favour and some sign thereof, as he had done eight years ago. He was a graver man now, a deeper poet.

An inner strife racked him, sitting there at the

base of the pillar, emotion divided against itself, a mind bewildered between irreconcilables, a spirit abashed before its own inconstancy. One moment it was abashed, the very next it cried, "*But I am constant!*" Then came mere aching effort to bring old order out of this pulsing chaos, and then, that slipping, an unreasoning, blind and deaf, poignant and rich, half bliss, half pain — emotions so fused that there was no separating them, no questioning or revolt. He sat there as in a world harmonized — then, little by little, reformed itself the discord, the question, the passionate self-reproval for disloyalty and the bewildering answering cry from some mist-wreathed, distance-sunken shore, "*I am not disloyal!*" and then the query of the mind, "*How can that be?*" Garin buried his face in his hands, sat moveless so in the cathedral dusk. Within, there was vision, though not yet was it deep enough. He was seeing the years through which he had sung to the Fair Goal.

The time went by. He dropped his hands, rose, and after a genuflection left the great church. Without, Rainier joined him. Together they climbed the steepening street, crossed the castle moat, and entering between Lion and Red Towers, went to the building that lodged De Panemonde and Castel-Noir. Thence, presently, fresh of person and attire, he came alone, and alone crossed courts and went through rooms and echoing passage-ways and by the castle garden until he came to the White Tower.

CHAPTER XX

THE WHITE TOWER

Upon the wide steps that led to the door he found Pierol, who, turning, went before him through a hall or general room to a flight of stone steps winding upward. From this he was brought into a small room where were ladies and pages. Pierol, motioning to him to wait, vanished through an opposite door, then in a moment reappeared. Garin, answering his sign, went forward and, passing beneath the lintel, found himself in the princess's chamber.

She sat beside a table placed for the better light before the southern window. She had been writing; as she looked up, the light behind her made a kind of aureole for her head and long throat and slender, energetic form. "Give you good day, Sir Garin de Castel-Noir!" She nodded to Pierol and the girl Maeut, who left the room. Near her stood a middle-aged, thin, scholarly-appearing man in a plain dress — her secretary, Master Bernard. She spoke to him, giving directions. He answered, gathered up papers from the table, and bowing low, followed Pierol and Maeut. The princess sat on for a few moments in silence, her forehead resting upon her hand. To Garin, standing between table and door, the whole fair, large room, the figured hangings, the beamed

ceiling, the deep-set windows, the floor where were strewn autumn buds and shoots from the garden, seemed a rich casket filled with a playing light. The light had a source. Garin felt a madness, a desire to sink wholly into the light, a wish to unclasp once and forever the hold of the past, accompanied by a dizzying sense that in no wise might it be done. The inner man put steadying hands upon himself, forced himself to look into the eye of the day and of duty.

The princess let fall her hand, turned slightly in her chair, and faced him. Her look was still and intent; behind it stood a strong will, an intelligence of wide scope. There might seem, besides, a glow, a tension, an urging as of something that would bloom but was held back, postponed, dominated. She spoke and her voice had a golden and throbbing quality. "I have sent for you, Sir Knight, because I wish to ask of some one great service, and it has seemed to me that you would answer to my asking" —

Garin came nearer to her. "I answer, my lady."

"You will be, and that for long days, in great peril. Peril will begin this very eve. I do not wish now to tell you the nature of your adventure — or to tell you more than that it is honourable."

"Tell me what you will, and no more than that."

"Then listen, and keep each step in mind — and first of all, that the matter is secret."

"First, it is secret."

"At dusk a jongleur will come to your lodging,

bringing with him a dress like his own, his lute and other matters. Clothe yourself like him, cut your hair closer, somewhat darken your face. Let him aid you; he is faithful. Wear a dagger, but no other arms nor armour. You will go, too, afoot. Knightly courage you will need, but keen wit must do for hauberk and destrier, sword and lance. When you are dressed you are henceforth, for I know not how many days or weeks, the jongleur Elias of Montaudon."

"Thus far, I have it in mind. — *Elias of Montaudon.*"

"You know the postern called the rock-gate, on the northern face, between Black Tower and Eagle Tower?"

"Yes."

"When the bells are ringing complin you will go there alone. You will wait, saying naught to any who may come or go. If you are challenged you will say that you are there upon the princess's errand, and you will give the word of the night. It is *Two Falcons.*"

"At complin. *Two Falcons.*"

"You will wait until there comes to you one mantled. That one will give you a purse, and will say to you, 'Saint Martin's summer.' You will answer 'Dreams may come true.'"

"'*Saint Martin's summer.*' — '*Dreams may come true.*'"

"The purse you will take and keep — keep hid-

den. It will be for need. That mantled one you are to follow, and, without question, obey. — Now tell over each direction."

Garin told, memory making no slip. He ended, "I am to follow that one who, giving me a purse, says *Saint Martin's summer*. He commands and I obey — "

"As you would myself," said the princess.

She turned in her chair, looked beyond him out of the window upon tower and roof and wall and the November sky of a southern land. "I hold you true knight, true poet, true man," she said. "Else never should I give you this charge! Keep that likewise in memory, Sir Garin de Castel-Noir, Sir Garin de l'Isle d'Or! — And now you will go. Tell Sir Aimar de Panemonde that you have been set a task and given an errand full of danger, but that, living, he may see you again by Christmas-tide. Tell no one else anything."

"Going on such an errand and so long," said Garin, "and one from which there may be no returning, I would kiss your hands, my liege —"

She gave her hand to him. He knelt and kissed the slender, long, embrowned fingers. As they rested, that moment, upon his own hand, there came into his mind some association. It came and was gone like distant lightning, and he could not then give it name or habitation. He rose and stepped backward to the door. "God be with you, my Lady Audiart—"

"And with you," the princess answered gravely.

Outside the White Tower he paused a moment and looked about him, his eyes saying farewell to a place that in actuality he might not see again. It was the same with the garden through which he presently passed. Now it was sunshine, but he thought of it in dusk, the eve when he had been there with the princess. Later in the day he found Aimar, and told him as much as he had been told to tell and no more. The two brothers-in-arms spent an hour together, then they embraced and Aimar went to the men of both, defending the city wall. When the sun hung low in the west, Garin sent there also his squire Rainier. The sun sank and he stood at his window watching.

Around the corner came a man in brown and yellow like autumn leaves. Slung from his neck by a red ribbon he had a lute, and under his arm a bundle wrapped in cloth. He reached the entrance below, spoke to the porter and vanished within. Garin, turning from the window, answered presently to a knock at the door. "Enter!" There came in, the room being yet lit by the glow from the western sky, the brown and yellow man. He proved to be a slender, swarthy person, with long, narrow eyes and a Moorish look. "I speak," he asked, "to the right noble knight and famed troubadour Sir Garin of the Black Castle — also called of the Golden Island?"

"I am Sir Garin. I know you for the jongleur, Elias of Montaudon."

"That poor same, fair sir! — Moreover I have

here that which will make in the castle of Roche-de-Frêne two of me!" He laid the bundle on a bench, and slipping the ribbon from his neck placed there the lute as well. "When I think that from so famous a troubadour I am set to make a poor jongleur, I know not how to take my task! But princesses are to be obeyed, and truly I would do much for this one! And for your comfort, lord, — only for that and never for vain-glory, — I would have you to wit that Elias of Montaudon hath a kind of fame of his own!" As he spoke he untied the bundle. "It is an honour that you should deign to wear me, so to speak, in whatever world you are repairing to — and Saint Orpheus my witness, I know not where that world may be! So, noble sir, here is, at your pleasure, a holiday suit — only a little worn — and a name no more frayed than is reasonably to be expected!"

"Gramercy for both," answered Garin. "How have you fared between the days of Guy of Perpignan and now?"

He took the lute from the bench, swept the strings, and sang, though not loudly: —

"In the spring all hidden close,
Lives many a bud will be a rose!
In the spring 't is crescent morn,
But then, ah then, the man is born!
In the spring 't is yea or nay,
Then cometh Love makes gold of clay!
Love is the rose and truest gold,
Love is the day and soldan bold —"

He owned a golden voice. The notes throbbed through the room. The last died and he laughed. "That song of Guy of Perpignan! — I heard it first from you."

The jongleur stood staring. "I have been in many a castle hall and bower, at an infinity of tournaments, and two or three times where baron and knight were warring in earnest. Up and down and to and fro in the world I practice my art, riding when I can and walking when I must! But when I had the honour of striking viol, lute or harp before you, sir, I do not recall. Being so famous a knight and poet, I should remember —. And then men say that you have been long years in the land over the sea!"

"It was before I went to the land over the sea. — But come! the sky is fading, it is growing dusk. Light the candles there, and begin to turn me into your other self!"

The candles lighted, the jongleur shook out the clothing he had brought. "Earth-brown and leaf-green," he said, "with a hooded mantle half the one and half the other. — Now, noble sir, I can play the squire as well as the squire himself!"

He took from Garin the garments which the latter put off, gave him piece by piece those that were to transform. The two, jongleur and knight and troubadour, were much of a height. Garin was the more strongly built, but the garb of the time had amplitude of line and fold and Elias of Montaudon's

holiday dress fitted him well enough. "Of deliberation and answering to command," said the jongleur, "it has been slightly rent and patched here and discoloured there. If the Blessed Virgin herself asked me why, I could not tell her! I have also a phial of a brown stain which, lightly used, makes for a darker complexion than the sun has painted you with. . . . Sir Garin of the Golden Island, in hall and bower and wherever chivalry gathers, I have sung songs of your making. But when and where have I sung *to* you? I have curiosity, without which life would be a dull dream! Give largesse, sir, in the coin of a wiser world — that is to say, give knowledge!"

Garin smiled. "I was esquire then, and you sat by a boulder in the forest, not so many miles from Roche-de-Frêne and discoursed of jongleur merits and of an ingrate master, to wit, Guy of Perpignan! Also you sang certain lines of his, and spoke sapiently of Lord Love. That, too, was an autumn day, and when I was a squire I wore brown and green."

The jongleur lifted both hands and beat a measure upon his brow. "Ha! and by Saint Arion and his dolphin you did! A proper squire, singing a hunting stave — Ha!" cried Elias of Montaudon, "I have heard sing a master-poet before he was poet!

> "'In the spring 't is crescent morn,
> But then, ah then, the man is born!'

though, certainly, it was autumn! . . . I remember

as clear as crystal! I was asleep, and you waked me, coming up on a great horse —"

"Just so. I left the saddle and let Paladin graze, and we talked."

"Clearer than Saint Martha's well! . . . The talk was of love, and that you had not yet a lady — By all the saints!" said Elias, "how soon must that have been remedied!"

Garin laughed, but there was rue in his laughter. He suddenly grew grave, the rock-gate before his mind's eye. "Come! let us have this stain. Shorten, too, my hair." He took up Elias's lute and tried its strings. "Play the jongleur — play the jongleur. Every man has in his *garde-robe* every dress! The king can play the beggar, and the beggar play the king. Be quick, courageous, and certain in the change — so is the trumpet answered!" He put the lute's ribbon over his head. "It falls night. Hasten, Elias of Montaudon, and while you work tell me your own life these six years! If I make another of you, I will make it like!"

The man in brown and yellow worked. . . . At last there stood in the lighted room, not a knight and crusader and troubadour, but a jongleur with a brown face, with a somewhat tarnished brown and green attire, with a lute slung by a red ribbon, on his head a cap with a black cock's feather, at his belt a dagger and sheath of the best Italian make. Dagger and sheath the knight had supplied. It was now full night, and not so long before, from every

house of the religious in Roche-de-Frêne, complin would ring. The jongleur in brown and yellow took his leave. He had his fee, he said; likewise a command as to a bridled tongue. The jongleur in brown and green saw him go, then put out the candles, pushed a bench to the window, and sitting down waited for the signal next in order. . . . At last the bells spoke.

Garin, rising, left the room and descended the stair. The passage below was in darkness, at the exit but one smoky torch. He drew the wide mantle closely about him, pulling the hood over head and face. His step said to the man at the door, "Sir Garin." He passed, an unquestioned inmate, not clearly seen in the light blown by the autumn wind.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ROCK-GATE

At the northern point of the Mount of Roche-de-Frêne, castle wall and wall of the town made as it were one height, so close did each approach the other. Huge rock upon rock, Roche-de-Frêne lifted here from the plain. This was the impregnable face, sheer rock and double wall, at the bottom a fosse, and, grim at the top, against cloud or clear sky, Black Tower and Eagle Tower. In the high and thick curtain of stone between was pierced the postern called the rock-gate. Here Garin came, on a night not cold and powdered with stars.

The gate had its turret, and within the shadow of the wall a long bench of stone. Ordinarily, day or night, there might be here a watch of twenty men. To-night he saw that this was not the case. There was a sentinel pacing to and fro before the turret. This man stopped him.

"The princess's errand," said Garin.

"The word?"

"*Two Falcons.*"

"Just." The speaker paced on.

Garin, going on to the gate, pondered voice and air. They seemed to him not those of any customary sentinel, but of a knight of renown, a foster-brother

of the princess. By the turret were other shadowy figures — three or four. These also kept silence, or, if they spoke among themselves, spoke briefly and too low for their words to be distinguished.

Garin, Elias of Montaudon's mantle close about him, sat down upon the bench in the angle made by wall and turret. He thought that the shadowy figures took note of him, but they did not speak to him nor he to them. They and he were silent. There fell the sentinel's step, and sounds now vague, now distinct, from Black Tower and Eagle Tower, both of which were garrisoned. For the rest came the usual murmur of the armed and watchful night. Garin lifted his eyes to the starry sky. At first his faculties drank simply the splendour of the night, the blended personalities of scene and hour; then some slight thing brought Palestine into mind. There came before the inner vision the eve of his knighthood, when he had watched his armour in the chapel of a great castle, crusader-built. That was such a night as this. There had been an open window, and through the hours, as he knelt or stood, he had seen the stars climb upward. The emotion of that night rekindled. It came from the past like a slender youth and walked beside the stronger-thewed and older man. Garin watched the stars, then with a long, sighing breath, let his gaze fall to the sky-line, vast, irregular, imposing, and to the mass of buildings that the earth upheld. Here was deep shadow, here a pale, starlight illumination. Here light rayed out

from narrow windows, or a carried torch or lanthorn displayed some facet of the whole.

He turned toward the White Tower. He could see it dimly between two nearer buildings. . . . He rose from the bench. Figures were approaching, two or three. They also were mantled, face and form. Two stopped a few steps away, the third came on. He advanced to meet it. He could only tell that it was slender, somewhat less tall than himself. The mantle enveloped, the cowl-like hood enveloped. A hand held out a purse which he took. It felt heavy; he put it within the breast of his robe.

"*Saint Martin's summer*," said a voice.

He answered. "*Dreams may come true.*" His heart beat violently, his senses swam. The stars overhead seemed to grow larger, to become vast, throbbing, living jewels. It appeared that the world slightly trembled. . . .

The mantled form turned head, motioned to those who had stopped short. These came up, then after a word all moved to the rock-gate. To right and left of this now stood the men who had waited by the turret. The night had grown still. Montmaure, busy with changes of position, let night and day go by without attack. Roche-de-Frêne kept watch and ward, but likewise, as far as might be, sank to needed sleep. The investing host, the great dragon that lay upon the plain, seemed, too, to sleep. The castle up against the stars slept or held its breath. The small rock-gate opened. Garin and that one

who had given him the purse and changed with him the countersign passed through. After them came the two who had accompanied that one. Garin now saw that the taller of these was Stephen the Marshal. The gate closed behind them.

They stood upon a shelf of rock. Below them they saw the stars mirrored in the castle moat. One of the accompanying men now passed in front and led the way. They were in a downward-sloping, tunnel-like passage. It wound and doubled upon itself; for a time they descended, then trod a level, then felt that they were upon a climbing path. At last came again descent. At intervals they had seen through the crevices overhead the stars of heaven; now the passage ended with the stars at their feet, dim light points in the still water of the moat, stretching immediately before them, closing their path. A boat, oared by one man, lay upon it. The four from the castle towering overhead stepped into this; it was pushed from the sheer rock. In a moment there showed no sign of the road by which they had come. The boat went some way, then turned its prow to the opposing bank. It rose above them dark and sheer. No lasting stairway was here, but as the boat touched the masonry, a hand came over the coping above, and there dropped one end of a ladder of rope. The man who had led the way through the tunnel caught it and fastened it to a stanchion at the water's edge.

"Go first," said Stephen the Marshal to Garin.

The latter obeyed, went lightly up the ladder, and upon the moat's rugged bank found himself among two or three men, kneeling, peering down upon the boat and its occupants. That one who had said "Saint Martin's summer" came next, light and lithe as a boy. Last of the four mounted the one who had fastened the ladder and gone ahead in the tunnel. Garin thought him that engineer whom the princess highly paid and highly trusted.

They were now between the moat and the wall of the town, rising, upon this northern face, in the very shadow of the castle rock. About them were roofs of houses. They went down a staircase of stone and came into a lane-like space. Before them sprang, huge and high, the burghers' wall, with, on this side, no apparent gate, but a blankness of stone. On the parapet above, a sentinel went by, larger than life against the sky that was paling before the approach of the moon. Some sound perhaps had been made, at the moat or upon the stair between the houses; for now a guard with halberds, a dozen or more, came athwart their road with a peremptory challenge to halt.

A word was given, the guard fell back. The four from the castle, followed by those who had met them at the moat, went on, walking in the shadow of the wall that seemed unbroken, a blank, unpierced solid. They had moved away from the most precipitous point of the hill of Roche-de-Frêne, but now they were bearing back. High above them, almost

directly overhead, hung that part of the castle wall where was set the rock-gate.

They came to a huge buttress springing inward from the city wall, almost spanning the way between it and the moat. Here, in the angle was what they sought. From somewhere sprang a dim light and showed a low and narrow opening, a gate more obscure even and masked than that by which they had left the castle. Here, too, awaited men; a word was given and the gate opened. A portcullis lifted, they passed under, passed outward. There was a sense of a gulf of air, and then of Montmaure's watch-lights, staring up from the plain. As without the gate in the castle wall, so here, they stood upon a ledge of rock, masked by a portion of the cliff and by a growth of bush and vine. Behind them was Roche-de-Frêne, castle and town; before them the rock fell sheer for many feet to a base of earth so steep as to be nearly precipitous. This in turn sank by degrees to a broken strip, earth and boulder, and to a wood of small pines which merged with the once-cultivated plain.

The dragon that lay about Roche-de-Frêne watched less closely here to the north. He could not get at Roche-de-Frêne from this side: he knew that no torrent of armed men could descend upon him here. His eyes could not read the two small, ambushed doors, out of which, truly, no torrent could come! Perhaps he was aware that the besieged might, some night-time, let down the cliff spy or

messenger striving to make a way north to that distant and deaf King of France. If so, that daring one might not at all easily pass the watch that the dragon kept. Gaultier Cap-du-Loup and his Free Companions encamped in this northern quarter.

Those who stood without the wall of Roche-de-Frêne looked from their narrow footing forth and down upon the fields of night and the flickering tokens of the dragon their foe. The men who had handled the rope-ladder at the moat now knelt at the edge of this shelf, made fast a like stair but a longer, weighted the free end with a stone, and swung it over the cliff side. It fell: the whole straightened itself, hung a passable road to the foot of the rock. That attained, there would rest the rough and broken hillside that fell to the wood, the wood that fell to the plain where the dragon had dominion. The night was still, the waning moon pushing up from the east.

That one who alone had used the phrase "Saint Martin's summer" spoke to Garin: "Go you first," and then to Stephen the Marshal: "Now we say farewell, Lord Stephen!"

Garin, at the cliff edge, heard behind him the marshal's low and fervent commendations to the Mother of God and every Saint. He himself set his feet upon the rope-stair, went down the rock-side, touched the stony earth at the base, stood aside. That other, that strange companion of this night, came lightly after — not hurriedly, with a light

deliberateness — and stood beside him on the moon-silvered hill. The moon showed a woman, slender and lithe, with a peasant's bodice and ragged, shortened kirtle and great mantle of frieze. At her word he loosened the weighting stone, drew at the rope three times. Those at the top of the rock receiving the signal, the ladder was drawn slowly up, vanished. Above the two soared the clean rock, and loftier yet, the bare, the inaccessible wall of Roche-de-Frêne. Black Tower and Eagle Tower seemed among the stars. There was a gulf between them and those small, hidden, defended entrances. The strained gaze could see naught but some low, out-cropping bushes and a trailing vine. Up there the men who had brought them to that side of the gulf might yet be gazing outward, listening with bated breath for any token that that dragon was awake and aware; but they could not tell if it were so. Up there was the friendly world, down here the hostile. Up there might be troubadour-knight and princess, down here stood jongleur and peasant.

They stood yet a moment at the foot of the crag, then she who was dressed as a worker among the vines or a herd to drive and watch the flocks turned in silence and began to descend the moonlit boulder-strewn declivity. She was light of foot, quick and dexterous of movement. Garin, who was now Elias of Montaudon, moved beside her. They came down the steep hill, bare and blanched by the moon. The dragon had no outpost here; did he plant one, the

archers upon the town wall might sweep it away. But the shafts would not reach to the wood — there perhaps they might hear the dragon's breathing. They went without speech, and with no noise that could be helped of foot against stone. . . . Here was a slight fringe of pine and oak. They stood still, listened — all was silent. They looked back and saw Roche-de-Frêne and the castle of Roche-de-Frêne bathed by the grey night.

"Cap-du-Loup and his men hold in this quarter," said the woman in a low voice. "We had a spy forth who got back to us three days since. Cap-du-Loup's tents and booths are thrown and scattered, stony ground and seams in the earth between the handfuls. He does not keep stern watch, not looking for anything of moment to descend this way. Hereabouts is the ravine of the brook of Saint Laurent, and half a mile up it a medley of camp-followers, men and women."

She had not ceased to move as she spoke. They were now in the midst of a spare growth of trees, under foot a turf burned by the sun and ground to dust by the tread, through half a year, of a host of folk. Some distance ahead the night was copper-hued; over there were camp-fires. They were now, also, in the zone of a faint confused sound. They moved aside from the direction of the strongest light, the deepest, intermittent humming, and came, presently, to the brook of Saint Laurent. It flowed through a shallow ravine with rough, scarped banks.

Down it, too, came faint light and sound, proceeding from the camp of followers.

"Our aim," said she in peasant dress, "is to be found at dawn among that throng, indistinguishable from it, and so to pass to its outermost edge and away."

They were standing above the murmuring stream. Overhead the wind was in the pine-tops. There were elfin voices, too, of the creatures of the grass and bush and bark. All life, and life in his own veins, seemed to Garin to be alert, awake as never before, quivering and streaming and mounting like flame.

"I am Elias of Montaudon," he said. "I understand that, and how to play the jongleur, and that if peril comes and stands like a giant and questions us, I am no jongleur of Roche-de-Frêne nor allied there —"

"Say that you are of Limousin."

"I have not dropped from the sky into the camp of Cap-du-Loup, but have been singing and playing, telling japes and tales, merry or sad, vaulting and wrestling elsewhere in the host —"

"With the men of Aquitaine. Say that in Poitou Duke Richard himself praised you."

"And should they question me of you?"

"I also am of Limousin. There I watched sheep, but now I am your *mie* and a traveller with you."

"By what name am I to call you?"

"I am Jael the herd. You will call me Jael."

They were moving this while up the stream. Did

any come upon them now, it would hardly be held that they had flown from the battlements of Roche-de-Frêne. The ground was rough, the trees, crowding together, shut out the light from the moon, while the fires at the end of vistas grew ruddier. The muttering and humming also of the host in the night increased.

Jael the herd stood still. "It will not suit us to stumble in the dark upon some wild band! Here is Saint Laurent's garden of safety. Let us rest on the pine-needles until cock-crow."

They lay down, the jongleur wrapped in his mantle, the herd-girl in hers. "We must gather sleep wherever it grows," said the latter. "I will sleep and you will watch until the moon rounds the top of that great pine. Wake me then, and look, Elias, that you do it!"

She pillowed her head upon the scrip or wallet which she carried slung over her shoulder, and lay motionless. The jongleur watched. . . . The barred moon mounted higher, the night wheeled, eastern lands were knowing light. Garin, resting against a pine trunk, lute and wallet beside him on the earth, kept his gaze from the sleeper, bestowed it instead upon the silver, gliding boat of the moon, or upon the not-distant, murky glare of unfriendly fires. But gaze here or gaze there, space and time sang to one presence! Wonder must exist as to this night and the morrow and what journey was this. Mind could not but lift the lanthorn, weigh likelihoods, pace

around and around the subject. That quest drew him, but it was not all, nor most that drew. . . . *Jaël the herd! Jael the herd!* Here came impossibilities — dreams, phantasies, rain of gold and silver, impossibilities! He remembered clearly now a herd-girl, and that when he had asked her name she had answered "Jael." Many shepherdesses trod the earth, and a many might be named Jael! Moreover sheer, clear impossibility must conquer, subdue and dispose of all this mad thinking. She who lay asleep was like that herd-girl — he saw it now — shape, colouring, voice — That and the name she had happened to choose — that and the torn, shepherdess garb — to that was owed this dizzy dreaming, this jewelled sleet of fancy, high tide of imagination, flooding every inland. . . . Things could not be different, yet the same — beings could not be separate, yet one — or in some strange, rich world, could that be so? But here was mere impossibility! Garin strove to still the wider and wider vibrations. *The Fair Goal — The Fair Goal!* . . . The moon rounded the top of the pine tree.

He crossed to the sleeper's side, knelt, and spoke low. "My liege —" She stirred, opened her eyes. "My liege, the moon begins to go down the sky."

With her hand pressed against the pine-needles she rose to a sitting posture. "I slept — and, by my faith, I wanted sleep! Now it is your turn. Do not again call me liege or lady or princess or Audiart. The wind might carry it to Cap-du-Loup. Say always

to me, 'Jael.' And now lie down and sleep. I will wake you when the east is grey."

Garin slept. The Princess Audiart rested against a tree, and now watched the moon, and now the fires kindled by her foe and Roche-de-Frêne's, and now she watched the sleeping man. The attire which she wore, the name she had chosen for the simple reason that once before she had chanced to take it up and use it, brought brightly into mind a long-ago forest glade and a happening there. But she did not link that autumn day with the man lying wrapped in Elias of Montaudon's cloak, though she did link it with Jaufre de Montmaure who had kindled those fires in the night. It came, a vivid picture, and then it slept again. There was, of need, a preoccupation with this present enterprise and its chaplet, necklace, girdle, and anklets of danger, no less than with its bud of promise which she meant, if possible, to make bloom. Her own great need and the need of Roche-de-Frêne formed the looming presence, high, wide, and deep as the night, but, playing and interblending with it, high, wide, and deep as the day, was another sense. . . . She gazed upon Garin of the Golden Island lying wrapped in the jongleur's cloak, and the loss of him was in the looming night, and the gain in the bud of promise and the feeling of the sun. To-night, her estate seemed forlorn enough, but within she was a powerful princess who did not blink her own desires though she was wise to curb and rein and drive them rightly.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SAFFRON CROSS

Moon and stars began to pale. The camp-followers up the stream had poultry with them, for from that direction a cock crew and was answered. The herd-girl waked the jongleur. "I have black bread in my scrip," she said. "Look if you have not the same."

He found a portion of a loaf; they sat by the brook Saint Laurent and he cut the bread with his dagger and they ate and drank of the water.

Light strengthened, it became grey-pearl under the pines. "Chill! chill!" said the herd-girl. "Often I think of how it would be to lie out under the sky, winter, spring, summer and now! So many thousands do. — Now, we will be going."

They moved along the bank of the stream. "We go north," said Garin's mind. "Will she go to the King at Paris?" But he waited without question until she was ready to say. Jongleur and herd-girl, they walked through the grey and dewy world. The trees now stood further apart, they were coming to open ground. To their right the east showed stripes of carnation. The cocks crew again; the mutter and murmur of the night suddenly took height and depth, became inarticulate clamour of the day and an encamped, huge host. The light strengthened.

Between the stems of trees they saw, at no great distance, huts and booths of autumn branches. They stood still for a little in the flush of the brightening dawn — divers regarding the sea into which they were to plunge, the sea whose every wave was inimical. They looked, then, each turning a little, their eyes met. It was but for a moment; immediately they went forward.

Elias of Montaudon was all dusk and green of garb, and dusk of brow and cheek. But his dagger hung in a gilt sheath and his lute by a red ribbon, and his eyes were grey with glints of blue. Jael the herd, too, was hued like a Martinmas leaf, and her hair hung over her bosom and to her knee, in long, dusk braids. The jongleur had a vision of dark hair loosened and spread in elf-lock and wave, half hiding a face more girlish than this face, but as this face might have been, eight years agone. Impossibilities — dreams, phantasies, magic somewhere, impossibilities!

They were now almost clear of the broken ground and the remnant of wood. They looked back and saw Roche-de-Frêne lifted against the solemn sky; stood still and for a minute or more gazed, and as though the walls were glass, viewed the tense life within.

"Did you ever see Richard of Aquitaine?" asked the herd-girl.

"No," answered the jongleur, and felt a momentary wonder, then the dawn of a conjecture.

The herd-girl turned again to their wandering and he followed her, then walked beside her. . . . Leaving the last group of trees, they came with suddenness upon a little pebbly shore of the stream and upon half a dozen women, kneeling and beginning the washing of clothes. Several ragged children sat by a fire of sticks and made an outcry when the two came from the wood. The women looked up. "Hè! a jongleur!" cried one. "Come trill me a love-lay while I wash my sergeant's one shirt!"

Elias and Jael came near, sat by the fire of sticks, and felt the warmth pleasant. The first drew his hand across the strings of his lute and sang: —

> "Sweet May, come! the lovers' sweet season,
> In May Love seems the height of reason!
> Try your love when the year grows older,
> The birds depart and the earth is colder. — "

He stopped. "Saint Michael! the mist is yet in my throat. Your fire, gossips, is the sweet, crackling singer —"

One of the women sat back upon her heels, and, hands on hips, regarded the two. "From what camp are you? You are not of our camp?"

"No. We have been over yonder — near to the young count."

"If Cap-du-Loup saw you he would have your lute broken and you sent to wait on fighting men! Cap-du-Loup loatheth jongleurs and monks! Your *douce* there he might take — but no, I think that he

would not. She is not fair, and she has the look of one with claws —"

"I have claws, sister," said Jael. "But I know how to keep them sheathed." She yawned. "This good fire makes you sleepy. Pretty children, let me rest my head upon that log for a bit! Play to us, Elias, if you cannot sing."

She put her head down, closed her eyes, lying in the firelight. The jongleur played and he played strange quaint airs that made the washerwomen laugh, nod their heads, and pat with their hands. After this he played quieter strains, a dreamy and monotonous music, humming to it a thought of the East. They listened, then turned to their rubbing and beating of clothes, working as in a dream, to a soothed and unquestioning mood.

Jael sat up, warmed her hands at the fire, looked to the west. On the other side of the brook of Saint Laurent a trampling sound arose and grew. The mist yielded a grey vision of horsemen approaching in number. They loomed, there ran before them noise — harsh voices, ribald laughter. The washerwomen sprang to their feet, gathered hastily into their arms the scattered garments, seized by the hands the children.

"Jacques le Noir and his men! Get out of their way! Jesu! What a world where your own side tramples and abuses —"

They turned up the stream, quarrelling as they went. With them and the children went the jongleur

and the herd-girl, all faring along the bank together, in the mist that was now being torn by golden arrows. One of the women, with a load of wet, half-washed clothing, let fall a part of the burden. The herd-girl, stooping, gathered it up. "I'll help you here, sister!" A child struck its foot against a stone, fell, and began to cry. The jongleur lifted him to his shoulder. Behind them they heard Jacques le Noir splash with his horsemen into the stream. The washerwomen and the two from Roche-de-Frêne went on like one family or like old acquaintances, and so came into the thickly peopled camp of the followers of Cap-du-Loup and his fighting men.

The sun was now risen. The pied and various world in which they found themselves had breakfasted or was breakfasting. Noise prevailed, self-wrought into some kind of harmony. Here were women, soldiers' and others' wives, and frank harlots, and here were children, seraphic, impish, and all between. Here harboured men of sorts, men who cared for horses, were smiths, menders of harness and armour, fitters of lance-heads to lances, fletchers of arrows. Here were barber-surgeons, cooks, and servitors of servitors. Sutlers and merchants of small wares showed both men and women, as did also the amusement-mongers. There abounded folk of nondescript and uncertain trades, or of no trades at all, mere followers and feeders, a true rabble. And there were gamesters and cunning thieves.

Elias of Montaudon and Jael the herd came into

this throng in the company of the women who had washed by the brook of Saint Laurent. The air was yet hung with mist-wreaths; they entered with these about them, and none took especial notice.

The washerwomen did not stray from the brook. Down they flung their half-washed, wet, and dripping loads, and complained loudly to any who would listen of Jacques le Noir and his demon band. Some listened, some did not; the most had recitals of their own. Voices sprang like grass-blades, were confounded. . . . With the others Jael threw upon the ground her load, Elias set down the child he had carried. Then in the confusion they went away, leaving without staying word or hand the group that had brought them thus far. They followed the brook Saint Laurent and they passed many folk, buried in their own concerns. To an eye not observant beyond a certain point, the two would seem a loitering couple of the camp, vacant and idly straying, being set at the moment to no task. None greeted them as acquaintances — but there seemed here no eye to note that fact. Units and groups shifted like the bits of glass in a kaleidoscope. Continually the tube was shaken and there came up new arrangements. The two went on, and none saw in them wandering bodies from outer and hostile space, pursuing a course athwart the field of the kaleidoscope. . . . The mist was gone, the sun poured light; looking back, they saw Roche-de-Frêne, indeed, but always farther, farther from them.

They approached the edge of the camp-followers' demesne. It frayed out among trees and gullies and heaps of refuse. Presently came a strip of bare earth, recently burned over, licked clean by the flame, and desert of human works or being. Beyond, flung widely, grey reefs across their way, were soldiers' tents. Jael the herd's lips moved. "Come down, for a minute, into this hollow where none will see."

Descending a miniature slope, they stood in a narrow space between walls of parched earth. The camp behind them, the camp before them, sank abruptly from view, though the sound of each remained. Roche-de-Frêne sank from view; they were roofed by the blue sky. A lizard ran from stone to stone; a wind, circling the place, lifted into air dead leaves and particles of earth. The herd-girl, seating herself, opened the scrip that she carried. The jongleur watched her take from it something at which he started. It was a piece of saffron-coloured cloth, cut in the shape of a cross. The upright measured near two feet, it and the arms had a palm's breadth. The next thing that she did was to find a needle and thread; then she took her frieze mantle, and after an instant of looking into the pure, deep heavens, began to fasten upon the mantle the saffron cross.

Garin held his breath. Holy Church had many penances for erring souls, and the most were acquiesced in with the least possible inner pain, and some were dreaded, and a few were direfully dreaded,

shudderingly looked upon. The most were burdensome but matter-of-fact; some gave the weak flesh sharp pain, but did not necessarily humble one in the eyes of the world and the neighbours. A certain number had for label, *Humiliation*, and they were dreaded. A few were more sinister than these, frightening the imagination. One or two brought a dark terror, dark and cold. These did not partake of the nature of prostrations, or of prayers in multiplied repetition, or of flagellations, or pilgrimages, or amercement of goods. Flagellation was of temporary account; pilgrimages a way to see the world as well as to wipe out sin; loss in money and land a serious thing, God knew! but though bitter, without ignominy. None of these came under the same sky with excommunication, which was not penance, but doom and living death! But to wear a cross like this came under the same sky.

It carried no physical pain with it, nor imprisonment within material walls. Of itself, it did not dip into the purse, or shear away house and land. Of itself, it did not say, "Leave your home, penitent, and wander to many a shrine, know many calvaries!" Incidentally it might have come after — most often it did come after — these lesser things. It was rarely bound, like the mark of Cain, upon the young in offending. It came somewhat rarely upon any but the poor. So long as there was any wealth there might be compounding for something less than the millstone. . . . It was not likely to be imposed for

any less time than a long, long while. Perhaps it was worn for years, perhaps they died wearing it. It weighed hardly anything materially, but it weighed life down. The people regarded it with superstitious horror. It said, "Lo, shadow and substance of sin that may hardly be pardoned! Lo, here the Obdurate, the Ancient and Resigned to the Prince of the Power of the Air — preserved that ye may see — set aside in the midst of you that ye may know! Not to be touched, not to be dealt with in pleasant, human ways — any more than a leper!"

Garin looked. His face had paled beneath the stain applied by the true Elias. "Ah!" he said, "what people of the future comes, my Lady Audiart, from such as you!"

The other stood up, her sewing finished. She drew the cloak over her shoulders, and her right arm and side showed the saffron cross. Her dark eyes met Garin's. "Now you are my brother. We are twin, and Saint Peter himself would not have you utterly forsake me! Let us go."

They came out from the crack in the earth and proceeded to cross the burned strip. All in all, they had now penetrated some distance in the dragon's field. When they looked over their shoulder, Roche-de-Frêne yet showed with grandeur in the morning light, against the south-east quarter of a fleckless sky. But it showed as somewhat distant. . . . Garin understood now that they were to cross the dragon's field, to leave it behind them, to escape as quickly

as might be from its poisonous breath, from the reach of its talons. He saw also that, danger-grown as was their path of travel, it was the least so that should have been taken from the beleaguered place. The dragon lay here, too, but not, perhaps, the brain nor eyes of him.

The day shone bright and cool. Directly ahead a large campfire yet smoked and smouldered, and right and left of it and beyond grew the somewhat tattered tents of Cap-du-Loup's force. In the assault, on the way to the assault, Cap-du-Loup drove his men like a storm. At other times he let them live as they would.

There were Free Companions, a score or so, around the fire. These caught sight of the two upon the burned and blackened strip between them and the followers' camp. There was passage to and fro, as the gods of license knew! Many figures of the world strayed almost at will, found lanes enough through the loose warp of the time's armies. A woman and a jongleur might find a groove, so easy, so worn — There were, however, toll-gates.

Men who had been lying on the ground sat up. "Come across! Come across!" called one. Another rose to his feet and went to touch first, so claim first. A third sprang up, ran after, but a young giant, starting fourth, outstripped him, gained on the first. The men had been idle after a night's sleep. Breakfast of goat's flesh and bread was digested, the slight enough camp tasks disposed of, after which came

idleness and yawning. Cap-du-Loup meant to join Aimeric the Bastard in a night attack upon Roche-de-Frêne's western gate, and until then the storm slept. The Free Companions were ready for movement, enterprise, deviltry. They rose from the ashy fire, and finding pleasure in stretching of the limbs, raced after their fellows. The distance was a pygmy one; immediately they were at their goal — the giant just the first.

He put his hands upon the woman. "Come, my *mie* — come, my jewel!" The one who had started first began to clamour that he was first; there arose a noise as from any brute pack. The giant, dragged at by his fellows, half turned, turning with him her he grasped. The saffron cross came into view.

The Free Companion's hands dropped. He, and every man as he saw it, gave back. The recoil left black earth between them and Jael and Elias. Quarrelling and laughter alike sank. Here was neither wooing nor taking, but a hand stole down, picked up a stone and threw it. It struck her, then she spoke. "Leave to the cross them who wear it, brave soldiers!"

The giant came from a hamlet that tilled Abbey fields, and he was wise beyond his fellows in what the Church said. Moreover he was by nature unresistant to Authority. It was not he who had thrown the stone, and now he struck down the arm of one who gathered a second missile. "Abbot Arnaut told us we must n't ever do that! If you do, God the

Father'll lengthen your score — burn you a year longer in Purgatory!"

"It's the serpent of sin. — Naught's doing but stoning!"

"You can't strike man or woman when they've touched sanctuary! Yellow cross's a kind of sanctuary —"

The giant found some upon his side. "That's true! Father Andrew preached a sermon about it, Saint John Baptist's day! — You don't break into a house marked for plague. Holy Church says, 'This cross's my seal. I punish, and don't you be trying to better it!'"

"That's true! Holy Church says, 'Have no communion, for good or for ill! Here is something fearful and not like it was mortal!'"

The black earth widened about Jael and Elias. "What is the man doing with her?" cried the first runner.

Another yet more reckless lifted voice. "Is a jongleur to be a heathen and we can't? Is he to give the dare to a Free Companion?"

Despite the giant and those backing him, the pack came nearer, narrowing the black mark. Garin spoke. He was accustomed to lead and command men, fusing their will with his. Use gave him power here also, though they that he faced knew not what it was. And he had other powers over men and himself. He spoke. "Good soldiers! I am her brother, twin with her, and I had a vision that I was not

utterly to forsake her. The priest said that I was to mind it." He brought his lute forward, and as he spoke he drew from the strings notes of wistfulness and beauty. "So we started many months ago, on a pilgrimage from Pont-de-Lys in Limousin (for we are of Limousin) to Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne. And after that we fared on a long way to the north, to the famous shrine of Saint Thomas in Burgundy." He was playing very sweetly, notes of unearthly tenderness and melancholy. "There the vision came again and told me to return the way we had come to Limousin, and then, without rest, to go on pilgrimage to Saint James, the brother of the Lord, at Compostella."

He changed and deepened the strain until it had solemnity, became music played in churches. "She speaks not often to me, nor I to her. She touches me not, and I touch not her. But the vision said, 'Go with her to Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne, and then to the shrine of Saint Thomas'; and then it said, 'Turn and go with her to Compostella.' The priest said, 'Obey that which spoke to you, and It will see that you are not hindered.'" His lips shut. He had spoken in a voice that he knew how to use so as to bring the heart into acquiescence, and his fingers still spoke on, upon the strings of the lute.

The half-ring parted. It felt horror of the saffron cross, but, strange to itself, it also now felt pity and an impulse to help. Its ill passion fell cold and dead. Sufficiently swift and deep and for sufficiently long

time came the change. Whether there was responsible some saint, or suggestion, or these beings' proper motion, here was what answered for miracle. The giant was the spokesman.

"The way is clear so far as we are named! Go on, poor soul, and brother jongleur, and maybe there's a star somewhere to shine for you! — Nay, I'll go before and see that no man of Cap-du-Loup breaks sanctuary — no, nor harms you, jongleur!"

CHAPTER XXIII

CAP-DU-LOUP

THE giant was a Saint Christopher to Jael and Elias. He was great of height and bulk, feared for his strength and liked because of a broad simplicity and good-nature, apparent when he was not angry or hot in the midst of allowed slaughter and rapine. For the saffron cross and the jongleur he proved, this day, the right convoy.

Cap-du-Loup had two hundred knights and a thousand fighting men. The knights' encampment they did not approach; it lay to the west, neighbouring the Lord of Chalus's quarter. But they went by, they went between, the tents and booths of the thousand men.

These shouted to them, these stopped them, these ran from farther tents. "Game! Game!" Cap-du-Loup's men cried. "Leveret! leveret! leveret!" — then saw the cross that the woman wore. It was a weapon to halt snatching hands, a spell to wither the lust in men's eyes. And when the heat turned to cold, and where, as twice again happened, another zeal sprang up and there threatened stoning, came in the giant's voice and arm, making room for the jongleur's voice and hand upon the strings. . . . Thrice-guarded, the two from Roche-de-Frêne

threaded the camp of Cap-du-Loup. It was noon now, and autumn sunshine thick about them. In broad day they passed the folds of the dragon, and then by a ruined house, cold and vacant as clay, they met with suddenness Cap-du-Loup.

The giant was afraid. "Little Mother of God, take care of us!" he said and caught his breath.

Cap-du-Loup was neither tall nor stout of build; he was rusty-red and small, but he could fright the giant, hold him knock-kneed. "What are you doing, Jean le Géant, wandering with hellfroth such as these?"

Jean le Géant answered like a child, telling all the why and wherefore.

"Begone where you kennel!" said Cap-du-Loup, when he had made an end. "You two, who came from Burgundy, what talk is made there of this war?"

He sat on a stone in the noon light, behind him a black and broken wall, and questioned the jongleur. He had looked once at the figure wrapped in frieze whereon was sewed a saffron cross. The woman seemed young, but the mantle was hooded, and that and the black hair astream about her face — She appeared dark as a Saracen and without beauty, and the cross did put a ring about her and a pale, cold light . . . Cap-du-Loup, who came from Burgundy, — though that had never interfered with the sale of his services to any high-bidding foe of Burgundy, — turned to the jongleur. "What talk is there?"

"Lord, as you know, the barons there have wars of their own! But I played upon a time in a hall where afterwards I listened to the talk of knights. It seemed to me that they inclined to Roche-de-Frêne. But what do I know?"

"Did any speak of me?"

"Lord, one was talking with a great merchant of Italy who was present. He said, 'There is a bold captain of Burgundy, Gaultier Cap-du-Loup, with Montmaure. He had been wiser, methinks, to have taken his sword to Roche-de-Frêne! If Aquitaine drops off —'"

"Wait there!" cried Cap-du-Loup. "What colour did they give for Aquitaine ceasing from us?"

"None, lord, that I heard. I heard no more," said Elias, "for I went out in the night to give my sister bread."

"Jean the foolish giant has said that you went first from Limousin to Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne. When were you in Roche-de-Frêne?"

"Lord, at Pentecost, before the siege began."

"What did you think, jongleur, of that town and castle?"

Cap-du-Loup looked at what he spoke of, lifted before them, shimmering in the light. Montmaure was attacking at the eastern gate. A noise as of dull thunder rolled over the plain.

"Lord," said the jongleur, "there are fellows of my art, who, to please, would say 'a poor town and a trembling castle!' But I think that you are not

such an one, but a man who greets with valiancy bare truth! To my apprehension, lord, it seemed a great town and a strong castle."

"It is God's truth!" said Cap-du-Loup, who for two months had received no pay for himself nor for his men. "At Pentecost the old prince yet lived. Saw you Audiart?"

"Lord, it was said that she was at mass one day when we stood without the church. When ladies and knights came forth some one cried, 'Audiart!' and I saw her, as it were among clouds."

"They say that she pays well and steadily. — Holy Virgin!" said Cap-du-Loup, "I would that Count Jaufre, who is to be her lord and husband, would take ensample!"

He spoke in a barking tone, and grew redder and fiercer. His small eyes without lashes looked at Elias of Montaudon as though he had suddenly remembered to call one to break the lute of the *fainéant* and cudgel him deep into the camp to wait on men who fought! But perhaps the jongleur's remembering the words "bold captain of Burgundy," or his knowing character and that Cap-du-Loup was not afraid of false or true, saved lute and shoulders. Perhaps it was something else, wolves being softened long ago by Orpheus. Or the giant's stammered explanation before, frightened, he went away, may have worked, or the pale, cold light about the woman have touched, to Cap-du-Loup's perception, her brother also. Perhaps it was something of all of

these. However that may be, Cap-du-Loup stared at Roche-de-Frêne against the sky, and, not for the first time of late, thought to himself that, all things being equal and Montmaure less strong by certain divisions than was the case, then a man would be a fool to come into his service rather than into that of the banner yonder! Then he somewhat lost himself, listening to Count Jaufre's battering the town's eastern gate.

Jael and Elias, standing in the shadow of the ruined house, listened, too, and with the eye of the mind saw the attack and the defenders. . . .

Cap-du-Loup rose from his stone, spoke to the jongleur. "If I have passed you, all shall pass you. If they stop you, tell them to come speak with Cap-du-Loup!" With that, and with a wolf-like suddenness, both fierce and stealthy, he was gone.

Jael and Elias, in the shadow of the black wall, saw him one moment, then a cairn-like heap of stones came between. . . . It was after the noon hour; though it was late autumn the southern land blazed light. Into their ears came the rhythmic dash and recoil of the distant conflict, came, too, the nearer buzz and hum, the sharp, discrete noises of the encampment whose edge they had gained. They saw that they were upon its edge, and that before them lay a road less crowded. This they took. At first men were about them, but these had seen them with Cap-du-Loup and disturbed them not. A trumpet blew and a drum was beat, and the Free Compan-

ions hurried to the sound. The two quickened their steps; they took advantage; before the diversion of vision and attention was ended, they were clear of the camp of Gaultier Cap-du-Loup.

Right and left lay the host of Montmaure, but ahead was rough, sharp, and broken ground, where horsemen might not manage their horses and disliked by men without steeds. Here was a bend of the brook Saint Laurent, and ground stony and sterile or ashen and burned over. The dragon possessed the wide plain; he drew water from the stream where he wished it, but for the rest left unoccupied this northward-drawn rough splinter of the world. . . . The two saw an outpost, a sentinel camp, but it was intent upon the crescendo of battle-sound pouring from Roche-de-Frêne, and upon what might be the meaning of Cap-du-Loup's calling trumpets. Jael and Elias slipped by, in the dry sunshine, beneath the brow of a hill, like a brace of tinted, wind-blown leaves.

After this they came into a solitude. It had not been always so, for here the rough ground fell away, Saint Laurent bent his stream like a sickle, and once had been bright fields and graceful vineyards. Here had stood many small houses of peasants who had tilled their fields, tended their vineyards, brought the produce and sold it to Roche-de-Frêne, trudging through life, often in the shadow and often in the sun. Now death only lived and abode and, black-winged, visited the fields. All things were

cut down, charred, and withered. The people were gone, and where had been houses stood ruins.

The herd-girl sighed as she walked. Once the jongleur saw her weeping.

It lasted a long way, this black swath beneath the sun. It led them out of the dragon's immediate field, away from his mailed and glittering coils. The dragon lay well behind them, his eyes upon Roche-de-Frêne. Roche-de-Frêne itself, now, was distant.

But the venom of the dragon had been spread wherever his length had passed. Not alone here, by the brook Saint Laurent, but all around now, as far as the eye could see, stretched blackening and desolation. All was overcovered with the writing of war. The princess of the land had ceased to weep. She viewed ruin with the face of a sibyl.

In the mid-afternoon they came upon knights resting by a great stone, in a ring of trees with russet leaves. These hailed the jongleur and the woman with him — when they saw what manner of penitent was the latter they crossed themselves and let her stay without the ring, seated among stones some distance from it. But they and their squires listened to Garin's singing.

He sang for them a many songs, for when one was done they clamoured for another. Then they gave him largesse, and would have constrained him to turn and go with them to the host of Montmaure, where would be employment enough, since Count

Jaufre nor no one else had many jongleurs of such voice and skill! Though they knew it not, voice and skill served him again when he turned them from constraining to agreement to let him go his way, on pilgrimage with her who sat among the stones. They made him sing again, and then, as all rested, they asked questions as to the host through which he had come. He knew, from this dropped word and that, that they were knights of Aquitaine, riding to join that same Jaufre.

With their squires they numbered but twelve in all. Food and wine were taken from the lading of a sumpter mule and placed upon the ground. They gave the jongleur a generous portion, consented to his bearing to the penitent of the cross, the Unfortunate his sister, portion of his portion. Returned, he asked of one of the squires with whom he ate, where was Duke Richard? He was at Excideuil.

"They say," said the jongleur, "that he and Count Jaufre laugh and sigh in the same moment."

"It was once so," answered the squire and drank wine.

"Is 't not so now?"

The other put down the wine cup. "Did you make poesy, jongleur, as well as you sing it, I could give you subjects! Songs of Absence, now. Songs of a subtile vapour called Difference, that while you turn your head becomes thick and hard! — Perhaps they think that they yet laugh and sigh in the same moment."

"One must be near a man to see the colour of his soul."

"Aye, so! — The knight I serve — him with the grey in his beard — is of Richard's household."

"I have sung in this court and sung in that," said Elias of Montaudon, "but chances it so that never I saw Duke Richard!"

"He paints leopards on his shield — they call him Lion-Heart — he is good at loving, good at hating — he means to do well and highly — but the passions of men are legion."

"I stake all," said the jongleur, "on his being a nobler knight than is Count Jaufre!"

"My gold with yours, brother," answered the squire, and poured more wine.

"And he is at Excideuil?"

"At Excideuil. He builds a great castle there, but his heart builds at going overseas and saving again the Holy Sepulchre!"

There was a silence. "He can then," said Elias of Montaudon, "be sought through the imagination."

"I know not wholly what you mean by that," said the squire. "But when he was made knight and watched his armour, he watched, with other matters, some sort of generosity."

The sun poured slanting rays, making the world ruddy. The knights, having rested and refreshed themselves, would get to horse, press on so as to reach the host before curfew. The ring beneath the tinted trees broke. The squires hastened, brought

the horses from the deeper wood. All mounted, turned toward the south and Montmaure.

"Farewell, Master Jongleur, Golden-Voice!" cried the eldest knight. "Come one day to the castles of Aquitaine!" Another flung him silver further than had yet been given. — They were gone. Almost instantly they must round a hill — the sight of them failed, the earth between smothered the sound of their horses' going, and of their own voices. Ere the sun dipped the solitude was again solitude.

Garin joined the princess where she sat among the stones. She sat with her chin in her hands, watching the great orb and all the scape of clouds. "Did they tell you where Richard is to be found?"

"He is to be found at Excideuil. I spoke with a seeing man, and this is what he said."

He repeated what had been said.

"So!" said the princess. "Let us be going."

They walked until the red dusk had given way to brown dusk and darkness was close at hand. She spoke only once, and then she said, "You also are a seeing man, Elias the Jongleur!"

A ruined wayside shrine appeared before them, topping a hill, clear against the pale, cold, remote purples and greens of the west. Their path mounted to it; they found all about it quiet and lonely. They talked until the sky was filled with stars, then they wrapped themselves in their mantles and slept, stretched upon the yet warm earth.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ABBEY OF THE FOUNTAIN

Morning broke. They rose and travelled on. This day they passed definitely from the dragon's present reach, though yet they were in lands of Roche-de-Frêne, done into ruin by him, poisoned by his breath. Adventures they had, perils and escapes. These were approached, endured, passed. At night they came to a hermit's cell where was no hermit, but on a stone hearth wood ready for firing. They closed the door, struck flint and steel, had presently a flame that reddened the low and narrow walls and gave the two, tired and cold, much comfort. The hermit's cupboard was found, and in it dried fruit and pease and a pan or two for cooking. Without the cell was water, a bubbling spring among moss and fern.

The night was dark and windy. None came to strike upon the hermit's door, no human voice broke in upon them. The wind shook the forest behind the cell and scoured the valley in front. It whistled around their narrow refuge, it brought at intervals a dash of rain against door and wall. But the two within were warmed and fed, and they found an ocean-music in the night. It rocked them in their dreams, it soothed like a lullaby. The princess dreamed of her father, and that they were reading

together in a book; then that changed, and it was her old, old nurse, who told her tales of elves and fays. Garin dreamed of the desert and then of the sea. Dawn came. They rekindled their fire and had spare breakfast, then fared forth through a high and stormy world.

Night came, day came, nights and days, beads of light and its doings, beads of dimness and rest. They kept no list of the dangers they entered and left, of the incidents and episodes of peril. They were many, but the two went through like a singing shaft, like a shuttle driven by the hand of Genius. Now they were forth from the invaded princedom, now they were gone from fiefs of other suzerains. Where they had faced north, now they walked with the westering sun.

When that happened, Jael the herd wore no longer the saffron cross. It had served the purpose, carrying her through Montmaure's host, that else might not have let a woman pass. . . . The two had slept upon leaves in an angle of a stone wall, on the edge of a coppice. The wall ran by fields unharmed by war; they were out from the shadow. A dawn came up and unfolded like a rose of glory. The coppice seemed to sleep, the air was so still. The night had been dry, and for the season, warm. Cocks crew in the distance, birds that stayed out the year cheeped in the trees.

The herd-girl took her frieze mantle, and, sitting upon a stone, broke the threads that bound to it the

Church's stigma and seal. The jongleur watched her from where he leaned against the wall. When it was free from the mantle, she took the shaped piece of saffron-dyed cloth and moving from the stone kneeled beside their fire of sticks and gave it to the flame. She watched it consume, then stood up. "It served me," she said. "I know not if it ever served any upon whom it was truly chained. As I read the story, He who was nailed to the cross had a spirit strong and merciful. It is the spirits who are strong that are merciful."

The rose in the east grew in glory. Colour came into the land, into the coppice, and to the small vines and ferns in their niches and shrines between the stones. Garin of the Golden Island stood in green and brown, beside him the red-ribboned lute. "As the first day from Roche-de-Frêne, so now again," said Audiart, "you are the jongleur, Elias of Montaudon. I am your *mie*, Jael the herd."

"Your will is mine, Jael the herd," said Garin.

He bent and extinguished the fire of sticks. The two went on together, the sun behind them. . . . Once Vulcan had had a stithy in this country. Masses of dark rock were everywhere, old, cooled lava, dark hills, mountains and peaks. Chestnut and oak ran up the mountain-sides, the valleys lay sunken, there was a silver net of streams. Hamlets hid beneath hills, village and middling town climbed their sides, castles crowned the heights, in vales by the rivers sat the monasteries. The region

was divided between smiling and frowning. Its allegiance was owed to a lord of storms, who, in his nature, showed now and then a broad golden beam. At present no wild beast from without entered the region to ravage; there it smiled secure. But Duke Richard drained it of money and men; its own kept it poor. He drained all his vast duchy and fiefs of his duchy, as his brothers drained their lands and his father drained England. They were driving storms and waters that whirled and drew; one only was the stagnant kind that sat and brewed poison. This region was a corner of the great duke's wide lands, but the duke helped himself from its purse, and the larger number of its men were gone to his wars.

But for all that, the jongleur and the herd-girl met a many people and saw towns that to them from Roche-de-Frêne seemed at ease, relaxed, and light of heart. Baron and knight and squire and man were gone to the wars, but baron and knight and squire and man, for this reason, for that reason, remained. Castle drawbridges rested down, portcullises rusted unlowered. The roads, bad though they were, had peaceful traffic; the fields had been harvested, and the harvest had not gone to feed another world. The folk that remained were not the fiercer sort, and they longed for amusement. It rested not cold, and folk were out of doors. The country-side, mountain and hill and valley, hung softened, stilled, wrapped in a haze of purple-grey.

Jongleur's art, human voice at its richest, sweet-

est, most expressive — such was wanted wherever now they went. They had jongleur's freedom in a singing time. Travelling on, they made pause when they were called upon. The jongleur sang the heart out of the breast, the water into the eyes, high thoughts and resolves into the upper rooms of the nature. The dark-eyed, still girl, his companion and *mie*, sat on doorstep, or amid the sere growth of the wayside, or stood in castle hall or court, or in the market-place of towns, and listened with the rest to the singing voice and the song that it uttered. The few about them, or the many about them, sighed with delight, gave pay as they were able, and always would have had the jongleur stay, sing on the morrow, and the morrow's morrow. But jongleurs had license to wander, and no restlessness of theirs surprised. Day by day the two were able, after short delays, to take the road again.

They came to Excideuil.

"Is the duke here?"

"No. He was here, but he has gone to Angoulême."

Elias of Montaudon brought that news to Jael the herd. She listened with a steady face. "Very well! In ways, that suits me better. There are those at Angoulême whom I know."

The jongleur sang in the market-place of Excideuil. "Ah, ah!" cried many, "you should have been here when our duke was here! He had a day when there sang six troubadours, and the prize was

a cup of gold! And yet no troubadour sang so well as you sing, jongleur!"

A week later, crown of a hill before them, they saw Angoulême. The morning light had shown frost over the fields, but now the sun melted that silver film and the day was a sapphire. Wall and battlement, churches, castle, brilliant and spear-like, stood out from the blue dome: beneath spread a clear valley and clear streams. Other heights had lesser castles, and the valley had houses of the poor. Travel upon the road thickened, grew more various, spiced with every class and occupation. The day carried sound easily, and there was more sound to carry. Contacts became frequent, and these were now with people affected, in greater or less degree, by the sojourn in Angoulême of Duke Richard. The air knew his presence; where he came was tension, energy held in a circumference. From the two that entered Angoulême spread another circle. Garin felt power and will in her whom he walked beside, felt attention. The force within him rose to meet hers and they made one.

The town grew larger before them, walls and towers against the sky.

"Ask some one," said Audiart, "where is the Abbey of the Fountain?"

He asked.

"The Abbey of the Fountain?" answered the man whom he addressed. "It lies the other side of the hill. Go through the town and out at the

west gate, and you will see it below you, among trees."

They climbed the hill and entered Angoulême, thronged with life. To the two who kept the picture of Roche-de-Frêne, wrapped in clouds of storm and disaster, Angoulême might appear clad like a peacock, untroubled as a holiday child. Yet was there here — and they divined that, too — grumbling and soreness, just anger against Richard the proud, coupled with half-bitter admiration. Here was wide conflict of opinion and mood. Life pulsed strongly in Angoulême.

Jongleur and herd-girl threaded the town, where were many jongleurs, and many women with them lacking church's link. They regarded the castle, and the Leopard banner above it. "Richard, Richard!" said the herd-girl, "I hope that a manner of things are true that I have heard of you!"

They came to the west gate and left the town by it. Immediately, when they were without the walls, they saw in the vale beneath groves of now leafless trees and, surrounded by these, the Abbey of the Fountain. Jael the herd stood still, gazing upon it. "I had a friend — one whom I liked well, and who liked me. Now she is abbess here — the Abbess Madeleine! Let us go down to the Abbey of the Fountain, and see what we shall see."

They went down to the vale. Great trees stretched their arms above them. A stream ran diamonds and made music as it went. Now there came to Garin

the deep sense of having done this thing before — of having gone with the Princess Audiart to a great house of nuns — though surely she was not then the Princess Audiart. . . . He ceased to struggle; earthly impossibilities seemed to dissolve in a deeper knowledge. He laid down bewilderment and the beating to and fro of thought; in a larger world thus and so must be true.

Passing through a gate in a wall, they were on Abbey land, nor was it long before they were at the Abbey portal. Beggars and piteous folk were there before them, and a nun giving bread to these through the square in the door. Garin and Audiart stood aside, waiting their turn. She gazed upon him, he upon her.

"Came you ever to a place like this," she breathed, "in green and brown before?"

"I think that it is so, Jael the herd."

"A squire in brown and green?"

He nodded, "Yes."

Jael the herd put her hand over her eyes. "Truth my light! but our life is deep!"

The mendicants left the portal. The slide closed, making the door solid.

"Wait here," said the herd-girl. "I will go knock. Wait here until you are called."

She knocked, and the panel slid back. He heard her speaking to the sister and the latter answering. Then she spoke again, and, after a moment of hesitation, the door was opened. She entered; it

closed after her. He sat down on a stone bench beside the portal and watched the lacework of branches, great and small, over the blue. A cripple with a basket of fruit sat beside him and began to talk of jongleurs he had heard, and then of the times, which he said were hard. With his lameness, something in him brought Foulque to Garin's mind. "Oh, ay!" said the cripple, "kings and dukes make work, but dull work that you die by and not live by! The court will buy my grapes, but—" He shrugged, then whistled and stretched in the sun.

"How stands Duke Richard in your eye?"

The cripple offered him a bunch of grapes. "Know you aught that could not be better, or that could not be worse?"

"Well answered!" said Garin. "I have interest in knowing how high at times can leap the better."

"Higher than the court fool thinks," said the cripple. He sat a little longer, then took his crutch and his basket of fruit and hobbled away toward the town.

Garin waited, musing. An hour passed, two hours, then the panel in the door slid back. A voice spoke, "Jongleur, you are to enter."

The door opened. He passed through, when it closed behind him. The sister slipped before, grey and soundless as a moth, and led him over stone flooring and between stone walls, out of the widened space by the Abbey door, through a corridor that echoed to his footfall, subdue his footfall as he

might. This ended before a door set in an arch. The grey figure knocked; a woman's voice within answered in Latin. The sister pushed the door open, stood aside, and he entered.

This, he knew at once, was the abbess's room, then saw the Abbess Madeleine herself, and, sitting beside her, that one whose companion he had been for days and weeks. The herd-girl's worn dress was still upon her, but she sat there, he saw, as the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne, as the friend, long-missed, of the pale Abbess. He made his reverence to the two.

The Abbess Madeleine spoke in a voice of a silvery tone, mellowing here and there into gold and kindness. "Sir Knight, you are welcome! I have heard a wondrous story, and God gave you a noble part to play. — Now will speak your liege, the princess."

"Sir Garin de Castel-Noir," said Audiart, "in Angoulême lodges a great lord and valiant knight, Count of Beauvoisin, a kinsman of the most Reverend Mother. She has written to him, to my great aiding. Take the letter, find him out, and give it to him, your hand into his. He will place you in his train, clothe you as knight again. Only rest still of Limousin, and, for all but this lord, choose a name not your own." She mused a little, her eyes upon the letter, folded and sealed, that she held. "But I must know it — the name. Call yourself, then, the Knight of the Wood." She held out the letter. He touched his knee to the stone floor and took it. "Go

now," she said, "and the Saints have a true man in their keeping!"

The Abbess Madeleine, slender, pure-faced, of an age with the princess, extended her hand, gave the blessing of Mother Church. He rose, put the letter in the breast of his tunic, stepped backward from the two, and so left the room. Without was the grey sister who again went, moth-like, before him, leading him through the corridor to the Abbey door. She opened this — he passed out into the sunshine.

Back in Angoulême, the first man appealed to sent him to the court quarter of the town, the second gave him precise directions whereby he might know when he came to it the house that lodged the Count of Beauvoisin, here in Angoulême with Duke Richard. By a tangle of narrow streets Garin came to houses tall enough to darken these ways, in the shadow themselves of the huge castle. He found the greatest house, where was a porter at the door, and lounging about it a medley of the appendage sort. Jongleur's art and his own suasive power got him entrance to a small court where gathered gayer, more important retainers. He sang for these, and heads looked out of windows. A page appeared with a summons to the hall. Following the youngster, Garin found himself among knights, well-nigh a score, awaiting in hall the count's pleasure. Here, moreover, was a troubadour of fame not inconsiderable, knight as well, but not singer of his own,

verses. He had with him two jongleurs for that, and these now looked somewhat greenly at Garin.

A knight spoke. "Jongleur, sing here as well as you sang below, and gain will come to you!" Garin sang. "Ha!" cried the knights, "they sing that way in Paradise!"

The troubadour advanced to the front of the group and bade him sing again. He obeyed. "Gold hair of Our Lady!" swore the troubadour. "How comes it that you are not jongleur to a poet?"

"I had a master," answered Garin, "but he foreswore song and, chaining himself to a rock, became an eremite. Good sirs, if the Count might hear me —"

"He will be here anon from the castle. He shall hear you, jongleur, and so shall our Lord, Duke Richard! Springtime in Heaven!" quoth the troubadour. "I would take you into my employ, but though I can pay linnets, I cannot pay nightingales! — Do you know any song of Robert de Mercœur?"

He asked for his own. Garin, seeing that he did so, smiled and swept the strings of the lute. "Aye, I know more than one!" He sang, and did sweet words justice. The knights, each after his own fashion, gave applause, and Robert de Mercœur sighed with pleasure. The song was short. Garin lifted his voice in another, made by the same troubadour. "Ah!" sighed Robert, "I would buy you and feed you from my hand!" He sat for a moment

with closed eyes, tasting the bliss of right interpretation. Then, "Know you Garin of the Golden Isle's, *If e'er, Fair Goal, I turn my eyes from thee?*"

Garin sang it. "Rose tree of the Soul!" said Robert de Mercœur; "there is the poet I would have fellowship with!"

The leaves of the great door opened, and there came into hall the Count of Beauvoisin, with him two or three famed knights. All who had been seated, or lounging half reclined, stood up; the silence of deference fell at once. Garin saw that the count was not old and that he had a look of the Abbess Madeleine. He said that he was weary from riding, and coming to his accustomed great chair, sat down and stretched himself with a sigh. His eyes fell upon the troubadour with whom he had acquaintance. "Ha, Robert! rest us with music."

"Lord count," said Robert, "we have here a jongleur with the angel of sound in his throat and the angel of intelligence in his head! Set him to singing. — Sing, jongleur, again, that which you have just sung."

Garin touched his lute. As he did so he came near to the count. He stood and sang the song of Garin of the Golden Island. "Ah, ah!" said the Count of Beauvoisin. "The Saints fed you with honey in your cradle!" A coin gleamed between his outstretched fingers. Garin came very near to receive it. "Lord," he whispered as he bent, "much hangs upon my speaking to you alone."

A jongleur upon an embassy was never an unheard-of phenomenon. The Count moved so as to let the light fall upon this present jongleur's face. The eyes of the two men met, the one in an enquiring, the other in a beseeching and compelling gaze. The count leaned back in his chair, the jongleur, when he had bowed low, moved to his original station. "He sings well indeed!" said the Count. "Give him place among his fellows, and when there is listening-space I will hear him again."

Ere long he rose and was attended from the hall. The knights, too, left the place, each bent upon his own concerns. Only the troubadour Robert de Mercœur remained, and he came and, seating himself on the same bench with Garin, asked if he would be taught a just-composed *alba* or morning song, and upon the other's word of assent forthwith repeated the first stanza. Garin said it over after him. "Ha, jongleur!" quoth Robert, "you are worthy to be a troubadour! Not all can give values value! The second goes thus —"

But before the *alba* was wholly learned came a page, summoning the jongleur. Garin, following the boy, came into the count's chamber. Here was that lord, none with him but a chamberlain whom he sent away. "Now, jongleur," said the count, "what errand and by whom despatched?"

Garin drew the letter from his tunic and gave it, his hand into the other's hand. The count looked at the writing. "What is here?" he said. "Does the

Abbess Madeleine choose a jongleur for a messenger?" He broke the seal, read the first few lines, glanced at the body of the letter, then with a startled look, followed by a knit brow, laid it upon the table beside him but kept his hand over it. He stood in a brown study. Garin, watching him, divined that mind and heart and memory were busied elsewhere than in just this house in Angoulême. At last he moved, turned his head and spoke to the page. "Ammonet!" Ammonet came from the door. "Take this jongleur to some chamber where he may rest. Have food and wine sent to him there." He spoke to Garin, "Go! but I shall send for you here again!"

The day descended to evening, the evening to night. Darkness had prevailed for a length of time when Ammonet returned to the small, bare room where Garin rested, stretched upon a bench. "Come, jongleur!" said the page. "My lord is ready for bed and would, methinks, be sung to sleep."

Rising, he followed, and came again to the Count's chamber, where now was firelight and candle-light, and the Count of Beauvoisin in a furred robe, pacing the room from side to side. "Wait without," he said to Ammonet, and the two men were alone together. The count paced the floor, Garin stood by the hooded fireplace. He had seen in the afternoon that he and this lord might understand each other.

The count spoke. "No marvel that we liked your singing! What if there had been in hall knight and crusader who had heard you beyond the sea?"

"Chance, risk, and brambles grow in every land."

"*Garin of the Golden Island.* — I know not who, in Angoulême, may know that you fight with Roche-de-Frêne. Duke Richard, who knows somewhat of all troubadours, knows it."

"I do not mean to cry it aloud. — Few in this country know my face, and my name stays hidden. — May we speak, my lord count, of another presence in Angoulême?"

The other ceased his pacing, flung himself down on a seat before the fire, and leaned forward with clasped hands and bent head. He sat thus for an appreciable time, then with a deep breath straightened himself. "When she was the Lady Madeleine the Abbess Madeleine ruled a great realm in my life. God knoweth, in much she is still my helm! . . . Sit you down and let us talk."

CHAPTER XXV

RICHARD LION-HEART

THE sun came up and lighted Angoulême, town and castle, hill and valley. Light and warmth increased. The town began to murmur like a hive, clack like a mill, clang and sound as though armourers were working. Angoulême had breakfast and turned with vigour the wheel of the day. The Count of Beauvoisin rode with a small following to the Abbey of the Fountain, to see his kinswoman the Abbess Madeleine. Duke Richard Lion-Heart did what he did, and felt what he felt, and believed what he believed, with intensity. He was as religious as an acquiescent thunderbolt in Jehovah's hand. Whereever he came, a kind of jewelled sunshine played about the branches, in that place, of the Vine the Church. It might shine with fitfulness, but the fitfulness was less than the shinng. His vassals knew his quality; when they were with him or where his eye oversaw their conduct, the ritual of a religious life received sharpened attention.

The Abbey of the Fountain was a noble House of Nuns, known afar for its piety, scholarship, and good works. Richard, coming to Angoulême, had sent a gift and asked for the prayers of the Abbess Madeleine, whom the region held for nigh a saint.

Offering and request had been borne by the Count of Beauvoisin, who was the Abbess's kinsman. It was not strange in the eyes of any that he should ride again to the Abbey of the Fountain, this time, perhaps, with his own soul's good in mind.

With him rode the knight who had come to the count's house in Angoulême in the guise of a jongleur. That was not strange, either — if the knight were acquaintance or friend, and if some wolfish danger had forced him to become a fugitive from his own proper setting, or if romance and whim were responsible, or if he had taken a vow. Yesterday he had been a jongleur with a very golden voice. To-day he appeared a belted knight, dressed by the count, given a horse and a place in his train. He was called the "Knight of the Wood." Probably it was not his true name. Chivalry knew these transformations, and upheld them as an integer in its own sum of rights. The knight would have a reason, be it as solid as the ground, or be it formed of rose-hued mist, solid only to his own imagination! For the rest, he seemed a noble knight. The count showed him favour, but not enough to awaken criticism, making others fear displacement.

All rode through the streets of Angoulême, in the bright keen day. Robert of Mercœur was neighbour of the Knight of the Wood, and looked aslant at him with an intuitive eye. They passed out by the west gate and wound down to the valley floor. It was no distance from the town to the Abbey of the

Fountain; the latter's great leafless trees were presently about them. The count with a word drew Garin to ride at his bridle-hand. The two or three following fell a little back. Beauvoisin spoke. "Richard says that he will be a week in Angoulême. But he knows not when his mood may change, and in all save three or four things he follows his mood."

The Knight of the Wood looked east and south. "I will answer for there being a vision of many in extremity, and a wild heartbeat to win and begone!"

"'Win.' — I know not, nor can you know as to that."

"The schools would say 'True, lord count!' But there is learning beyond learning."

They rode in silence, each pursuing his own thought. Beauvoisin rode with lifted head, gazing before him down the vista of trees, to where the grey wall closed it. Presently he spoke, but spoke as though he did not know that he was speaking. "We were within the prohibited degrees of kin."

The great trees stood widely apart, gave way to the grassy space before the Abbey.

The Count of Beauvoisin, his cap in his hand, was granted admittance at the Abbey portal; might, in the abbess's room, grey nuns attending her, speak with the veiled abbess. But they who were with him waited without, quietly, as the place demanded, in the grassy space. The Knight of the Wood waited.

The minutes passed. When an hour had gone

by, Beauvoisin came from the grey building. He mounted his horse, looked steadfastly at the place, then, with the air of a man in a dream, turned toward Angoulême. The knights followed him, riding between huge boles of trees that towered. Robert of Mercœur was again at Garin's side.

"Do you mark that look of exaltation? One man has one heaven and another, another — or that is the case while they are men. Count Rainier has seen his heaven — felt the waving of its hands over his head!"

In Angoulême, in its widest street, they saw approaching a cavalcade from the castle, a brilliant troop, glittering steel, shimmering fine apparel, pushing with gaiety through the town upon some short journey, half errand of state, half of pleasure. At its head rode one who had the noblest steed, the richest dress. He was a man very fair, long-armed, sinewy, of medium height. There was great vigour of bearing, warmth from within out, an apparent quality that drew, save when from another quarter of the nature came, scudding, wrath and tempest. The mien of command was not lacking, nor, to a given point, of self-command. He drew rein to speak to the Count of Beauvoisin; who with his following had given room, backing their horses into the opening of a narrower street.

"Ha, Beauvoisin, we sent for you but found you not! — Come to supper, man, with me to-night!" His roving blue eye found out Robert of Mercœur.

"Do you come with him, Robert — and we will talk of how the world will seem when all are poets!"

"Beausire," said the count, "at your will! Now I turn beggar and beg for you for guest in my house to-morrow."

"I will come — I will come!" said Richard.

He nodded to Beauvoisin, put his horse into motion, clattered down the ill-paved street. His train followed, lords and knights speaking to the count as they passed. When all were gone in noise and colour, those who had ridden to the Abbey of the Fountain reëntered the wider street and so came to the house whence they had started. Dismounting in the court where Garin had sung, they went, one to this business or pleasure, one to that. But the count, entering, mounted a great echoing flight of stairs to his chamber, and here, obeying his signal, came also the Knight of the Wood. Beauvoisin dismissed all attendants, and the two were alone.

"I have seen your princess," said Beauvoisin. "She is a gallant lady, though not fair."

"Ah, what is 'fair'? The time tells the eyes that such and such is beauty. Then comes another time with its reversal! But all the time, if the soul is 'fair'? The princess is 'fair' to me."

Beauvoisin looked at him steadily. "I see," he said "that we have a like fate — God He knoweth all, and what the great cup of life holds, holds, holds! . . .Well, that princess has courage and is wise! I had heard as much of her, and I see that it is so. In her first womanhood the Abbess Madeleine

was a long while at the court of Roche-de-Frêne. Your princess is her friend." He paced the room, then, coming to the fire, bent over the flame.

"I see, my lord count," said Garin, "devotion and generousness!"

Beauvoisin was silent, warming himself at the flame. Garin of the Golden Island, standing at the window, looked toward Roche-de-Frêne. His mind's eye saw assault and repulse and again assault, the push against walls and gates, the men upon the walls, at the gates, the engines of war, the reeking fury of fight. The keener ear heard the war-cries, the clangour and the shouting, and underneath, the groan. He saw the banner that attacked, and above the castle, above Red Tower and Lion Tower, the banner that defended. He turned toward the room again.

The count spoke, "*Jaufre de Montmaure!* I have no love for Count Jaufre, nor friendship with him. I was of those who, an they could, would have kept Richard from this huge support he has given. My party would still see it withdrawn. — But Richard treads a road of his own. . . Were Jaufre Richard, your princess, being here, would be in the lion's den! But just her coming — the first outbursting of his anger over — will put her person safe with Richard."

"That has been felt — knowing by old rumour certain qualities in him."

"It was truly felt. But as to the gain for which all was risked! — Jaufre has been to him an evil companion, but a companion. But," said the Count of Beauvoisin, "even at my proper danger, I will get

for her who, by Saint Michael! with courage has come here, the meeting she asks!"

The castle of Angoulême was not so huge and strong a place as the castle of Roche-de-Frêne, but still was it great and strong enough. The high of rank among its usual population remained within its walls, but the lesser sort were crowded out and flowed into the town, so making room for Duke Richard's great train. Martialness was the tone where he went, with traceable threads of song, threads of religiousness. Colours had violence, and yet with suddenness and for short whiles might soften to tenderness. There was brazen clangour, rattle as of armour, dominance of trumpets, yet flute notes might come in the interstices, and lute and harp had their recognized times. And all and whatever was in presence showed with him intense and glowing. Idea clothed itself promptly in emotion, emotion ran hotfoot into action, but none of the three were film-like, momentary. Impetuous, they owned a solidity. He could do, he had done, many an evil thing, but there was room for a sense of realms that were not evil.

It was afternoon, and the red sun reddened the castle hall. There had been planned some manner of indoor festivity, pageantry. The world of chivalry, men and women, gathered in Angoulême about Richard Lion-Heart, was there to see and be seen. But after the first half-hour Richard rose and went away. His immediate court was used to that, too.

His mood had countered the agreed-upon mood for the hour: naught was to do but to watch him depart. Music that was playing played more loudly; a miracle-story in pantomime was urged to more passionate action; as best might be, the chasm was covered. "It is the Duke's way — applaud the entertainers or the thing will drag!"

The duke went away to a great room in another part of the castle. With him he drew two or three of his intimates; in the room itself attended the Count of Beauvoisin and several knights of fame and worthiness. Among these stood that newcomer to Angoulême, the Knight of the Wood. The room was richly furnished, lit by the red light of the sun streaming through three deep windows. A door in the opposite wall gave into a smaller room.

Richard, entering, flung himself into the chair set for him in the middle of a great square of cloth worked with gold. His brow was dark; when he spoke, his voice had the ominous, lion note.

"My lord of Beauvoisin!"

Beauvoisin came near. "Lord, all is arranged —"

The duke made a violent movement of impatience, of anger beginning to work.

"This is a madness that leads to naught! Does this princess think I am so fickle — ?"

His blue eye, roving the room, came to the group of knights at the far end. "Yonder knight — is he Garin of the Golden Island?"

"Yes, lord."

Duke Richard gazed at Garin of the Golden

Island. "By the rood, he looks a man!" He turned to his anger again. "But now this woman — this Princess of Roche-de-Frêne —" His impatient foot wrinkled the silken carpet. "She may count it for happiness if I do not hold her here while I send messengers to Count Jaufre, 'Lo, I have caged your bride for you!'" He nursed his anger. Beauvoisin saw with apprehension how he fanned it. "What woman comprehends man's loyalty to man? I said to Montmaure I would aid him —"

"My lord, the princess is here — within yonder room."

"Ha!" cried Richard; and that in his nature that gave back, touch for touch, Jaufre de Montmaure, came through the doors his anger had opened. "Let her then come to me here as would the smallest petitioner! God's blood! Montmaure has her land. I hold her not as reigning princess and my peer!"

Beauvoisin stepped to the door of the lesser room, opened it, and having spoken to one within, stood aside. Duke Richard turned in his seat, looked at the red sun out of window. He showed a tension: the movement of his foot upon the floor-cloth might have stood for the lion's pacing to and fro, lashing himself to fury. At a sign from Beauvoisin the knights had drawn farther into the shadow at the end of the room. Garin watched from this dusk.

The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne came with simplicity and quietness from the lesser room. She was not dressed now as a herd-girl, but as a princess. There followed her two grey nuns who, taking their

stand by the door, remained there with lowered eyes and fingers upon their rosaries. The princess came to the edge of the gold-wrought square. "My lord duke," she said; and when Garin heard her voice he knew that power was in her.

When Richard turned from the window she kneeled and that without outward or inner cavilling.

"Ha, madame!" said Richard. "Blood of God! did you think to gain aught by coming here?"

She answered him; then, after a moment's silence which he did not break, began again to speak. The tones of her voice, now sustained, now changing, came to those afar in the room, but not all the words she said. Without words, they gave to those by the wall a tingling of the nerves, a feeling of wave on wave of force — not hostile, uniting with something in themselves, giving to that something volume and momentum, wealth. . . . There were slight movements, then stillness answering the still, intense burning, the burning white, of her passion, will, and power.

She rested from speech. Richard left his chair, came to her and giving her his hand, aided her to rise. He sent his voice down the room to Beauvoisin. "My lord count, bring yonder chair for the princess." He had moved and spoken as one not in a dream, but among visions. When the chair was brought and placed upon the golden cloth and she had seated herself in it, he retook his own. "Jaufre de Montmaure," he said, "was my friend, and he wanted you for bride —"

She began again to speak, and the immortal power

and desire of her nature, burning deep and high and rapidly, coloured and shook the room. "Lord, lord," she said. "The right of it — " Sentence by sentence, wave on wave, the right of it made way, seeing that deep within Duke Richard there was one of its own household who must answer.

That meeting lasted an hour. The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne, rising from her chair, stretched out her hands to Richard Lion-Heart. "I would rest all now, my lord duke. The sun is sinking, but for all that we yet will live by its light. In the morning it comes again."

"I will ride to-morrow to the Abbey of the Fountain. We will speak further together. I have promised naught."

"No. But give room and maintenance to-night, my Lord Richard, to all that I have said that is verity. Let all that is not verity go by you — go by you!"

Beauvoisin and his men gave her and the nuns with her escort back to the Abbey of the Fountain. Going, she put upon her head and drew forward so that it shadowed her face, a long veil of eastern make, threaded with gold and silver. Her robe was blue, a strange, soft, deep colour.

The next morning, Duke Richard rode to the Abbey. He went again the day after, and this day the sheaf was made. The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne and Jaufre de Montmaure appealed each to a man in Duke Richard, a higher man and a lower man. In these winter days, but sun-lighted, the higher man won.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FAIR GOAL

MESSENGERS, heralds, bearing decisive and peremptory speech, went from Richard, Count of Poitou and Duke of Aquitaine, to the Counts of Montmaure. Others were despatched to the leaders of the host of Aquitaine before Roche-de-Frêne. Duke Richard was at peace with Roche-de-Frêne; let that host therefore direct no blow against its lord's ally! Instead, let it forthwith detach itself from Montmaure, withdraw at once from the princedom of Roche-de-Frêne, and, returned within its own boundaries, go each man to his own home. *On your faith and obedience.* So the heralds to the leaders of the aid from Aquitaine.

To the Counts of Montmaure the heralds, declaring themselves true heart, mouth, and speech of Duke Richard, delivered peremptory summons to desist from this war. An they did not, it would be held to them for revolt from Richard their suzerain. . . . The heralds with their train rode fast and rode far.

The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne awaited in Angoulême the earliest fruit of this faring. She waited at first at the Abbey of the Fountain, but presently in the town as Duke Richard's guest. A great house was given her, with all comfort and

service. Ladies came to wait upon her, she had seneschal, chamberlain and page. If she would go abroad she had palfreys with their grooms, in her hall waited knights to attend her. Angoulême and its castle and the court about Duke Richard buzzed of her presence in this place, of what adventure had been hers to reach it, and of the attitude now of Richard Lion-Heart. They did not know detail of her adventure, but they knew that it had taken courage. They knew that Richard had in him power to turn squarely. They did not know all the whys and wherefores, depths and reasons of the right angle that made in Angoulême a whirling cloud of speculation, but as a fact they accepted it and proceeded with their own adaptation. The party that, for reasons personal to itself, had backed Montmaure, wagering in effect upon the permanency of his influence with Richard, took its discomforture as enforced surgery and found it wisdom's part to profess healing. The party that had been hostile to Montmaure found a clearing day and walked with satisfaction in the sun. Those — not many — who had stood between the two, found usual cautious pleasure in changing scenery and event. The most in Angoulême could give nine days to wonder. The Princess Audiart stayed with them no greatly longer time.

Duke Richard came to her house in state. In state she returned the visit, was met by him at the castle gate. He would give a joust in her honour,

and afterward a contest of troubadours. She sat beside him on the dais, and watched all with a gentle face, a still and inscrutable look. Beauvoisin was of those who tourneyed, and among the knights whom he brought into the lists rode Garin of the Black Castle, who did most well and was given great observance. The next day, when there was song, Richard called for Garin of the Golden Island, naming him famed knight, famed poet, famed bird of song, bird that sang from itself. Garin came before the dais, took from a jongleur his lute.

"Sir Garin of the Golden Island," said Richard, "sing *Within its heart the nightingale* — "

He sang — a golden song sung greatly.

"Ah!" sighed Richard Lion-Heart, and bade him sing *When in my dreams thou risest like a star*. "Ah God!" said Richard. "Some are kings one way, and some another! Sing now and lastly to-day, *Fair Goal*."

Garin sang. All Angoulême that might gather in the great hall, in the galleries, in the court and passages without, listened with parted lips. Richard listened, and in some sort he may have felt what the singer felt of goals beyond goals, of glories beyond the loveliness and glories of symbols, of immortal union behind, beneath, above the sweetness of an earthly fact.

One was present who did feel what the singer felt, and that was the princess who sat as still as if she were carven there. . . Garin of the Golden

Island won the golden falcon that was the duke's prize.

A week went by. A second began to drift into the past, winter day by winter day. Messengers now rode into Angoulême and through the castle gates, and were brought to Duke Richard. They came from the lords of Aquitaine encamped before Roche-de-Frêne, and they bore tidings of obedience. The host helped no longer in this war. When the messengers departed it was in act of lifting from all its encampments; even now it would be withdrawing from the lands of Roche-de-Frêne. Richard sent this word in state to the princess in Angoulême.

A day later there spurred at dusk into Angoulême a cloaked and hooded lord, behind him three or four, knights or squires. The following morn the first won through to Richard's presence. The two were alone together a considerable time. Those who waited without the room heard rise and fall of voices. . . . At last came the lion's note in Richard's voice, but it changed and fell away. He was speaking now with an icy reasonableness. That passed to a very still, pointed utterance with silences between. . . . The other made passionate answer. Richard's speech took a sternness and energy which in him marked the lion sublimated. Then a bell was struck; the attendants, when they opened the door, had a glimpse of a red-gold head and a working face, hook-nosed, with a scar upon its cheek.

Montmaure left Angoulême; he rode in savagery

and bitterness, his spur reddening the side of his horse, the men with him labouring after. He rode, whether by day or by eve, in a hot night of his own. Red sparks flashed through it, and each showed something he did not wish to see. Now it was Richard whom he doubted if ever he could regain, and now it was Richard's aid withdrawing — withdrawn — from the plain by Roche-de-Frêne. Cap-du-Loup — Cap-du-Loup would follow Aquitaine, might even now gustily have whirled away! Jaufre's spirit whispered of other allies who might follow. The glare showed him the force of Montmaure that was left, spread thinly before Roche-de-Frêne. It showed Roche-de-Frêne, as last he had seen it, over his shoulder, when he rode with fury and passion to work in Angoulême a counter-miracle, — as he would see it now again, — Roche-de-Frêne grim and dauntless, huge giant seated on a giant rock. Jaufre, whelmed in his night-time, shook with its immensity of tempest. The storm brought forth lights of its own. They showed him Montmaure — Montmaure also in motion — cowering forth, unwinning, from this war. They showed him Audiart the princess. When he came to Angoulême he had learned there who had wrought the miracle. . . . An inner light that was not red or born of storm trembled suddenly, far above the great fens and marshes and hot, wild currents. *That quality in her that had wrought the miracle* — It was but a point, a gleam, but Jaufre had seen white light. The storm closed

in upon him, but he had looked into a higher order, knew now that it was there. His huge, lower being writhed, felt the space above it

Hours passed, days passed. He came through country which he had charred, back to Montmaure's tents. The dragon lay shrunken; it could no longer wholly enfold Roche-de-Frêne. Jaufre found his father's red pavilion, entered.

Count Savaric started up. "Ha! you rode fast! Speak out! Is it good or bad?"

"Bad," said Jaufre, and faintly, faintly knew that it was good.

The days went by in Angoulême and there came again the heralds who had been sent to Montmaure. They brought Count Savaric's and Count Jaufre's submission to the will of their suzerain — since no other could be done and sunshine be kept to grow in! They brought news of the lifting of the siege of Roche-de-Frêne. On the morrow came one who had been in Roche-de-Frêne. He had to tell of joy that overflowed.

The Princess Audiart left the court of Richard Lion-Heart for her own land and capital town. She went with a great escort which Richard would give her. The danger now from the dragon that had ravaged her country lay only in the scattered drops of venom that might be encountered, — wild bands, Free Companies, wandering about, ripe for mischief, not yet sunk back into their first lairs. She and Duke Richard made pact of amity between his house

and hers, and she went from Angoulême on a grey day, beneath a cloud-roof that promised snow. At the Abbey of the Fountain she dismounted, entered to say farewell to the Abbess Madeleine and to kneel for Church's blessing. She had ladies now in her train. These entered with her, and two knights, the Count of Beauvoisin and Sir Garin of the Black Castle. Forth and upon the road, Beauvoisin rode at her right. He had the duke's signet, lord's power to bear her safely through every territory that owed allegiance to Richard.

The snow fell, but the air was not cold. They rode through the afternoon wrapped in a veil of large white flakes. In the twilight they reached a fair-sized town where great and rich preparation had been made for them. The next day also the snow fell, and they fared forward through a white country. Then the snow ceased, the clouds faded and a great heaven of blue vaulted the world. The sun shone and melted the snow, there came a breath as of the early spring.

In the middle of the day they pitched the princess's pavilion in the lee of a hill or in some purple wood. They built a fire for her and her ladies and, a distance away, a camp-fire. Dinner was cooked and served; rest was taken, then camp was broken and they rode on again. Time and route were spaced so that at eve they entered town or village or castle gate. Beauvoisin had sent horsemen ahead — when the princess and her company entered, they found

room and cheer with varying pomp of welcome. The night passed, in the morning stately adieux were made; they travelled on.

Riding east and south, they came now into and crossed fiefs that held from Montmaure who held from Aquitaine. Beauvoisin kept hawk-watch and all knights rode with a warrior mien. Care was taken where the camp should be made. Among those sent ahead to town or castle were poursuivants who made formal proclamation of Duke Richard's mind. — But though they saw many who had been among the invaders of Roche-de-Frêne, and though the country wore a scowling and forbidding aspect, — where it did not wear an aspect relieved and complaisant, — they made transit without open or secret hindrance. They came nearer, nearer to borders of Roche-de-Frêne. In clear and gentle weather the princess entered that fief which had been held by Raimbaut the Six-fingered.

This was a ravaged region indeed, and there was no town here for sleeping in and no great castle that stood. When the sun was low in the western sky they set the princess's pavilion, and one for her ladies, at the edge of a wood. A murmuring stream went by; there were two great pine trees and the fire that was lighted made bronze pillars of their trunks. Something in them brought into Audiart's mind the Palestine pillars before the shrine of Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne.

The sun was a golden ball, close to the horizon.

Wrapped in her mantle, she sat on a stone by the fire and watched it. Her ladies, perceiving that she wished to be alone, kept within the pavilions. Beauvoisin and his knights sat or reclined about their fire farther down the stream. Farther yet a third great fire blazed for the squires and men-at-arms. Upon a jutting mound a knight and a squire sat their horses, motionless as statues, watching that naught of ill came near the pavilions.

One upon the bank of the stream drew farther from the knights' fire and nearer to that of the princess, then stood where she might see him. She turned her head as if she felt him there.

"Come to the fire, Sir Garin," she said.

Garin came. "My Lady Audiart, may I speak? I have a favour to beg."

She nodded her head. "What do you wish, Sir Garin?"

Garin stood before her, and the light played over and about him. "We are on land that Raimbaut the Six-fingered held, whose squire I was. Not many leagues from this wood is Castel-Noir, where I was born and where my brother, if it be that he yet lives, abides. I would see him again, and I would rest with him for a time and help him bring our fief back to well-being and well-doing. — What I ask, my Lady Audiart, is that in the morning I may turn aside to Castel-Noir and rest there."

The princess sat very still upon the stone. The golden sun had slipped to half an orb; wood and hill

stretched dark, the voice of the stream changed key. Audiart seemed to ponder that request. Her hand shaded her face. At last, "We have word that ere we reach the Convent of Our Lady in Egypt there will meet us a great company of our own lords and knights. So, with them and with our friends here, we are to make glittering entry into Roche-de-Frêne. . . . I do not prize the glitter, but so is the custom, and so will it be done. Now if I have wrought much for Roche-de-Frêne, I know not, but I am glad. But if I have done aught, you have done it, too, for I think that I could not have reached Duke Richard without you. That is known now by others, and will be more fully known. . . . Will you not ride still to Roche-de-Frêne and take your share of what sober triumph is preparing?"

"Do you bid me do so, my Lady Audiart?"

"I do not bid you. I will for you to do according to your own will."

"Then I will not go now to Roche-de-Frêne, but I will go to Castel-Noir."

The princess sat with her elbow on her knee and her chin on her hand. She sat very still, her eyes upon the winter glow behind the winter woods. "As you will, Garin of the Golden Island," she said at last. Her voice had in it light and shadow. She sat still and Garin stood as still, by the fire. All around them was its light and the light in the sky that made a bright dusk.

He spoke. "*The Convent of Our Lady in Egypt.*

Martinmas, eight years ago, I was in Roche-de-Frêne. I heard Bishop Ugo preach and I knelt in the church before Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne. Then I went to the inn for my horse. There, passers-by asked me if I was for the feast-day jousts and revels in the castle lists. I said No, I could not stay. Then they said that there sat to judge the contest the Princess Alazais, and beside her, the Princess Audiart. I had no reason to think them mistaken. Were they right, or were they wrong? Were you there in Roche-de-Frêne?"

"Martinmas, eight years ago?—No, I was not in Roche-de-Frêne, though I came back to the castle very soon. I was at Our Lady in Egypt."

"Ah God!" said Garin with strong emotion. "How beautiful are Thy circles that Thou drawest!"

She looked at him with parted lips. "Now, *I* will ask a question! I wearied, that autumn, of nuns' ways and waiting ladies' ways and my own ways. One day I said, 'I will go be a shepherdess and taste the true earth!'" A smile hovered. "Faith! the experiment was short! — Now, my question. — Being a shepherdess, I was like to taste shepherdess's fare in this so knightly world. Then came by a true knight, though his dress and estate were those of a squire. — My question: — I asked him, that day, 'Where is your home?' He answered, that squire, and I thought that he told the truth, — 'I dwell by the sea, a long way from here.' — Sir Garin de Castel-Noir, that was squire to Raimbaut the Six-

fingered, neither dwelling nor serving by the sea but among hills, and not far away but near at hand, tell me now and tell me truly —"

"Jael the herd, I am punished! I thought to myself, 'I am in danger from that false knight who will certainly seek me.'"

"Ah, I see!" said the princess; and she laughed at him in scorn.

"It is an ill thing," said Garin, "to mistrust and to lie! I make no plea, my Lady Audiart, save that I do not always so."

"Certes, no! I believe you there. . . . Let it go by. . . . That shepherdess could not, after all, be to you for trustworthiness like your Fair Goal —"

She ceased abruptly upon the name. The colour glowed in the west, the colour played and leaped in the faggot fire, the colour quivered in their own faces. Light that was not outer light brightened in their eyes. Their frames trembled, their tissues seemed to themselves and to each other to grow fine and luminous. There had been a shock, and all the world was different.

Garin spoke. "On a Tuesday you were Jael the herd. On a Thursday, in the middle of the day, you came with your ladies to a lawn by the stream that flows by Our Lady in Egypt — the lawn of the plane, the poplar and the cedar, the stone chair beneath the cedar, and the tall thick laurels rounding all." He was knight and poet and singer now — Garin of the Golden Island — knight and poet and singer and

another besides. "A nightingale had sung me into covert there. I followed it down the stream, from grove to grove, and it sung me into covert there. The laurels were about me. I rested so close to the cedar — so close to the stone chair! One played a harp — you moved with your ladies to the water's edge — you came up the lawn again to the three trees. You were robed in blue, my princess; your veil was long and threaded with silver and gold, and it hid your face. I never saw your face that day — nor for long years afterward! You sat in the stone chair —"

"Stop!" said the Princess Audiart. She sat perfectly still in the rich dusk. Air and countenance had a strange hush, a moment of expressionless waiting. Then uprushed the dawn. He saw the memory awaken, the wings of knowledge outstretch. "Ah, my God!" she whispered. "As I sat there, the strangest breath came over me — sense of a presence near as myself —" The rose in her face became carnation, she sprang to her feet, turned aside. The fire came between her and Garin; she paced up and down in the shadowy space between the tree-trunks that were like the Saracen pillars.

Moments passed, then she returned and stood beside the stone.

Garin bent his knee. "My Lady Audiart, you, and only you, in woman form, became to me her whom for years I have sung, naming her the *Fair Goal*. . . . I left that covert soon, going away without

sound. I only saw you veiled, but all is as I have said. . . . But now, before I go to Castel-Noir, there is more that I would tell to you."

"Speak at your will," said the princess.

"Do you remember one evening in the castle garden — first upon the watch-tower, and then in the garden, and you were weary of war and all its thoughts, and bade me take Pierol's lute and sing? I sang, and you said, 'Sing of the Fair Goal.' I sang — and there and then came that sense of doubleness and yet one. . . . It came — it made for me confusion and marvel, pain, delight. It plunged me into a mist, where for a time I wandered. After that it strengthened — strengthened — strengthened! . . . At first, I fought it in my mind, for I thought it disloyalty. I fought, but before this day I had ceased to fight, or to think it disloyalty. Before we came to Angoulême — and afterwards. . . . I knew not how it might be — God knoweth I knew not how it might be — but my lady whom I worshipped afar, and my princess and my liege were one! I knew that, though still I thought I saw impossibilities — They did not matter, there was something higher that dissolved impossibilities. . . . I saw again the Fair Goal, and my heart sang louder, and all my heart was hers as it had been, only more deeply so — more deeply so! And still it is so — still it is the same — only with the power, I think, of growing forever!" He rose, came close to her, kneeled again and put the edge of her mantle to his lips. "And

now, Princess of Roche-de-Frêne, I take my leave and go to Castel-Noir. I am knight of yours. If ever I may serve you, do you but call my name! Adieu — adieu — adieu!"

She regarded him with a great depth and beauty of look. "Adieu, now, Sir Garin of the Black Castle — Sir Garin of the Golden Island! Do you know how much there is to do in Roche-de-Frêne — and how, for a long time, perhaps, one must think only of the people and the land that stood this war, and of all that must be builded again? . . . Adieu now — adieu now! Do not go from lands of Roche-de-Frêne without my leave."

The dark was come, the bright stars burned above the trees. There was a movement from the knights' fire — Beauvoisin coming to the princess's pavilions to enquire if all was well before the camp lay down to sleep.

Garin felt her clasped hands against his brow, felt her cheek close, close to his. "Go now," she breathed. "Go now, my truest friend! What comes after winter? — Why, spring comes after winter!"

CHAPTER XXVII

SPRING TIME

In the winter dawn Garin rose, saddled his horse, and, mounting, rode from that place. He travelled through burned and wasted country, and he saw many a piteous sight. But folk that were left were building anew, and the sky was bright and the sunshine good. He went by the ruins of Raimbaut's keep, and at last he came to Castel-Noir.

Foulque lived and the black tower stood. News of salvation had run like wildfire. Garin found Foulque out-of-doors, old and meagre men and young lads with him. The dozen huts that sheltered by the black castle, sheltered still. The fields that it claimed had gone undevastated. "Garin's luck!" said Foulque; whereupon old Jean crossed himself for fear that Sir Foulque had crossed the luck. — But the young and middle-aged men who had gone to war for Roche-de-Frêne had not yet returned. Some would not return. The women of the huts looked haunted, and though the children played, they did not do so freely. But the war had ended, and some would come back, and Christmas-tide was at hand and the sun shone on the brown fields.

Foulque saw Garin coming. He put his hand above his eyes. "*Peste!*" he said. "I always had good sight — what's the matter now? Look, boy, for my eyes blur!"

They all looked, then they cried, "Sir Garin!" and the younger rushed down to the road.

That day and night passed. The folk of Castel-Noir had liking for Sir Foulque, and that despite some shrewdness of dealing and a bitter wit. But they were becoming aware that they loved Sir Garin. He stood and told them of how this man had done and how that, of two brave deeds of Sicart's, and how Jean the Talkative talked but did well. He told them who, to his knowledge, had quitted this life; and he spoke not like a lord but like a friend to those who upon that telling broke into mourning. He could not tell them how life and death stood now among Castel-Noir men, for he had been away from Roche-de-Frêne. Castel-Noir came to understand that he had been upon some service for the princess, and that that explained why there was with him neither squire nor man. To Foulque that evening in the hall, by the fire, he told in part the story of what the princess had wrought for Roche-de-Frêne.

Foulque drew deeper breath. The colour came into his withered cheek, he twisted in his chair. "I heard rumours when Aquitaine lifted and went away, and Montmaure slunk back — but my habit is to wait for something more than rumours! . . . That is a brave lady — a brave adventure! By the mass! When I was young that would have stirred me!"

Garin laughed at him. "It stirs you now, Foulque!"

Foulque would not grant that. But even while he denied, he looked less crippled and shrivelled. "You

did your *devoir* also. . . . *Audiart the Wise* — Well, she may be so!"

"She is so," said Garin.

He slept that night, stirred in the early morning, rose, and, dressing, called to Sicart's son in the courtyard to bring his horse. Old Pierre gave him wheaten bread and a bowl of milk. Foulque, wrapped in his furred mantle, came from the hall and talked with him while he ate and drank. The sun at the hilltops, he rode down the narrow way from the black tower and was lost to sight in the fir wood. He rode until he reached a certain craggy height of earth from which might be viewed the road by which the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne must approach Our Lady in Egypt. The height was shaggy with tree and bush, it overhung the way, commanding long stretches to either hand. Dismounting, he tied his horse in a small, thick wood at the back of the hill, then climbed afoot to the rough and broken miniature plateau atop. Even as he came to this he saw upon the western stretch of the road two horsemen, and presently made out that they were men of Beauvoisin's sent ahead. They passed beneath him, cantered on, faces set for Our Lady in Egypt.

Garin found a couch of rock, a hollow, sand-strewn cleft where, lying at length, small bushes hid him from all observation. Here he stretched himself, pillowed his head upon his arms, and waited to see the princess pass. Time went by, and the morning air brought him sound from the other hand. He parted the bushes and looking east saw approaching

a great and gallant troop — lords and knights of Roche-de-Frêne, coming to greet their princess close within the boundaries of her own land. . . . They came on with banners — a goodly column and a joyful. Close at hand, he began to single out forms and faces that he knew, and first he saw Stephen the Marshal riding at the head, and then Raimon of Les Arbres, and beside this lord, Aimar de Panemonde. Garin's heart rejoiced that Aimar lived. He looked fondly upon his brother-in-arms, riding beneath the craggy hill. Many another that he knew he saw. Others he missed, and feared that they did not live or that they lay hurt, for else they would have been here.

The great troop, for all it rode with a singing heart, with exultation and laughter and triumph, had a war-worn look. The men and the horses were gaunt. The men's eyes seemed yet to be looking on battle sights. Their gestures were angular, energetic and final, their speech short, not flowing. The colour of bronze, the hardness of iron, the edge of steel were yet in presence. It was to be seen that they had known hunger and weariness and desperation, and had withstood with courage. The man stretched upon the rock-edge above the passing numbers felt his communion with them. They were his brothers. . . .

Not only these. As they rode by he saw in vision all the lands of Roche-de-Frêne and those who peopled them, men and women and children. And the town of Roche-de-Frêne and its citizens, men and women and children, and all who had defended

it. And all the hills and vales of life. . . . He saw the slain and the hurt and the impoverished and the hearts that bled with loss — the waste fields and the broken walls. He saw work to be done — long work. And when that work was done and there were only scars that did not throb, yet was there work — building and building, though it could not be weighed. He saw as he knew that she saw — and the land became deep and dear to him, and the people became father and mother and child, brother and sister and friend. . . . "It is a baptism," said Garin, and covered his eyes with his hands.

The great company went by, lessened in apparent bulk, lessened still upon the westward running road. Its trumpeters sounded their trumpets. Out of the distance came to Garin's ear an answering fanfare, delicate and far like fairy trumpets. Rising ground and purple wood hid the meeting between the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne and her barons and valiant knights.

The sun climbed toward the summit. The troubadour lay in the high cleft of the rock, felt the beams, breathed the clear, pure air, hearkened to the sough of the breeze in sere grass and bush. All earth and air were his, and the golden home of warmth and light, the great middle orb whose touch he felt. He waited for sound or sight that should tell him that the princess and her doubled train were coming. It was not long to wait. In the night a light rain had fallen — there was no dust, and the road was softened beneath the horses' hoofs. The great com-

pany appeared now, like a vision, brightened and heightened to the outer eye by strength of the inner. Beauty and might, and sadness and joy, all lights and all shadows, gained a firmer recognition.

Garin, concentred, watched the company come toward him. Again there echoed the eve of his knighthood, when through the darkness he had kept vigil. But he kept vigil now a more awakened being, with a wider reach and a richer knowledge.

The train came toward him, and now he heard the sound of it, the tread of horses, metallic noises, the human voice, all subdued to a deep murmur as of an incoming sea. This increased until single notes were distinguishable. The form grew larger, then he could see component forms. Music was being made, he saw the great blue banners. . . . And still he knew that all was a mightier and a brighter thing than yesterday he had known. . . . Now he saw the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne riding between Beauvoisin and Stephen the Marshal.

She passed the rock whereon he lay, and he saw a great and high and bright soul. . . It passed — all passed. He felt the darkness, but then the starlight.

He stayed yet an hour there in the cleft, with the brown grass about him and overhead the sky like sapphire. Then, descending the crag, he sought his horse in the wood and, mounting, turned his face toward Castel-Noir.

That evening in the black tower Foulque would discuss family fortunes, and how Castel-Noir might be first recovered, then enlarged. Garin listened,

spoke when the elder brother paused for him to speak. It seemed that he wished somehow to better the condition of tenants and serfs, to find and teach better methods of living. Foulque jerked aside from that. "We are good masters. Ask any one without this hall!"

"Good masters? . . . We may be. But —"

Foulque struck at the fire with his crutch. "You are a poet — I am a practical man. Let us leave dreaming! . . . Raimbaut's castle will be rebuilt by the next of kin."

"Dreaming? . . . What is dreaming?"

Foulque left his chair, and limped to and fro before the huge fireplace. Garin from the settle corner watched him. The light played over both and reddened the ancient hall. "Garin," said Foulque, "knightly fame is good and fame of a poet is good, and emirs' ransoms are good — God knows they are good! But when will you wed and so build our house?"

"Ah!" said Garin, "did you ever think, Foulque, of how long may be time?"

Foulque waved his hand. "You should not play with it! You should think of the future! They say that you love one whom you call the Fair Goal —"

But Garin, rising, moved to a deep window, and looking out, breathed the night. "There is the great star in the arm of the cypress! . . . I used to see that, when I lay in those hot towns of Paynimry." Nor would he speak again of that manner of building Castel-Noir.

The morrow came and went and the morrow and that morrow's morrow. December paced by and gave the torch of time to January. January, a cold and dark month, gave the torch to February, a brief and windy one, March had it then, and he had ideas in his head of birds and flowers. April came and the world was green.

The ravaging of the dragon was becoming in Roche-de-Frêne an old thought. Throughout the winter the Princess of Roche-de-Frêne and the able people of her lands laboured to redeem well-being and the conditions of growth. Plan and better plan, faint success and greater success; and now when the spring was coming, good ground beneath the feet! The land began to smile. The town of Roche-de-Frêne, the cathedral and the castle felt the warmth. Bishop Ugo preached the Easter sermon, and he preached a mighty and an eloquent one. You felt lilies and roses come up through it.

Ugo had said at Christmas-tide that he had never doubted the triumph of the right. Questioned at Candlemas, though very gently, by one of the hyperbold, he had answered gravely that Father Eustace, in confession, had acknowledged that he was not certain as to whether Our Blessed Lady of Roche-de-Frêne had indeed spoken to him. Pride had been in his heart, and the demon himself might have taken dazzling form and spoken! Father Eustace for penance had been sent, barefoot and dumb, to a remote monastery where in his cell he might gain true vision. Easter-tide, Bishop Ugo flowered praise

of Roche-de-Frêne's princess. That great lady took it with her enigmatical smile.

In the castle-garden Alazais watched the crocus bloom, the hyacinth and the daffodil. Gilles de Valence sang to her, and sometimes Raimon de Saint-Rémy, or, when no troubadour was there, Elias of Montaudon was brought upon the green-sward to sing other men's verses. Knights came and went. Her ladies made a bright half-ring about her, and she and they and the knights and poets discussed the world under the star of Love.

Sometimes Audiart came into the garden, but not often. There was much that yet was to be done. . . . She was oftener in the town than in the castle, often away from both, riding far and near in her domain, to other towns and villages and towers. But as the spring increased and the green leaves came upon the trees, order was regained. The sap of life returned to the veins that had been drained, time and place knew again hope and power. The princess looked upon a birthland that had lifted from a pit, and now was sandalled and ready for further journeying. She came oftener now to the garden, and at night, from her chamber in the White Tower, she watched the stars.

In the town whose roofs lay below her, the craftsmen were back at their crafts. Again they were dyeing scarlet and weaving fine webs and working in leather and wax and metal and stone. Merchant and trader renewed their life. Roche-de-Frêne once more hummed as a hive that produced, not destroyed. It produced values dense and small, but so it

learned of values beyond these. Presently the old talk of liberty would spring up, not feared by this princess. When, in late April, she held high court and a great council, Thibaut Canteleu — Master Mayor, clear-eyed and merry — sat, with two of the town's magistrates, in the council chamber.

On the eve of that council Stephen the Marshal spent an hour with the princess. She made him sit beside her in the White Tower; she spoke to him at length, in a low voice telling a story. Stephen listened with his eyes held by hers, then, when she kept silence, bowed his face upon his hands and sat so for a time. At last he raised his head. "Mine is a plain mind, my Lady Audiart, — only a faithful one! There are many good words, and 'friend' is a right good word, a high knight among them, and 'friendship' is a noble fief. I take 'friend' and 'friendship' for my wearing and my estate, my Lady Audiart — aye, and I will wear them knightly, not cravenly, with a melancholy heart! Friend to you and friend to him, and Saint Michael my witness! loyal servant to you both."

"Stephen, my friend," answered the princess, "you say true that great liking is a great knight, and lasting friendship is a mighty realm! It plants its own happiness in its own fields."

She rose, and standing with him at the window, spoke of old things, old long memories that they had in common, spoke of her father, Gaucelm the Fortunate.

The next day she held council, sitting on the dais

robed in blue, a gold circlet upon her head, facing her barons and knights-banneret, churchmen who held lands from her, and leaders of the townsmen. That which she had to lay before them was the matter of her marriage. . . .

At Castel-Noir the dark fir trees wore emeralds. The stream had its loud spring music. Nor Foulque nor Garin had been idle through the winter. Back to the Black Tower and the hamlet had come their men who had fought at Roche-de-Frêne — Foulque's men and the men who had come with Garin from the land over the sea. Houses had to be built for these — more fields ploughed and planted. Stables had to be made larger. The road was bad that led from the Black Tower to the nearest highway; it was remade. When spring came Castel-Noir was in better estate than ever before. Garin spoke of what manner of priest they should bring in — and of some clerk who might be given a house and who could teach.

Raimbaut the Six-fingered had for his fief been man of Montmaure, but for it Montmaure had been man of Roche-de-Frêne. Now, again, was it only Roche-de-Frêne's. Montmaure might look blackly across from his own borders, but that was all. . . . It seemed that, escheating to the ruling house, the barony was not yet given, for service paid and to be paid, to some lord who should rebuild the castle and bring up the lands that now were waste. . . . Foulque had hours of speculation as to that. In the hall, of

evenings, he looked out of the corners of his eyes at Garin, reading or dreaming by the fire. Who had done greater service, fought better, than Garin? If the princess were truly wise — if she were grateful—

Foulque spoke once on this matter to Garin, but received so absolute a check that his tongue declined to bring it forward again. None the less, his brain kept revolving the notion. To add to Castel-Noir the whole containing fief, from knight alone to become baron, to keep the Black Tower but to build besides a fair, strong castle — Who at Roche-de-Frêne, or away from Roche-de-Frêne, had served more fully than had Garin? Foulque thought with a consuming impatience of how little he seemed to care for wealth and honours.

On the heel of such an hour as this with Foulque, came Aimar de Panemonde. He came with the sheen and beauty of the spring. Foulque saw him from the tower window as he left the fir wood and began to mount the winding road. Behind him were four or five others. All rode noble horses, all were richly clad. It came into Foulque's head — from where he knew not — that here was an envoy with his company. The little troop seemed to him rich and significant, despatched with knowledge, directed to an end. At once Foulque connected that with Garin — and why again he knew not, save that, and despite his sluggishness in the matter of the fief, fairy things did happen to Garin.

Garin of the Golden Island met his brother-in-arms without the castle gate. Aimar threw himself from his horse. Foulque in the tower above watched the two embrace, then limped down the stair to meet the guest and order the household. . . . And soon it seemed that Sir Aimar de Panemonde might indeed be considered an envoy! The Princess of Roche-de-Frêne would have Sir Garin de Castel-Noir return to her court — commanded his presence on the day of Saint Mark.

There were three days to spare. Aimar, having discharged his mission, spent them happily, as did those who had ridden with him. Foulque made talk of the court and the town until — and that was not long — he found that, for some reason that he could not discern, Aimar did not talk readily of these. Ever Foulque wished guests of Castel-Noir to be happy, was courteously minded toward them. This one especially, seeing how great a friend to Garin he had been and was. So Foulque followed the lead of the younger men, and in the hall, after supper, had his reward in stories of the land over the sea — a thousand adventures not before drawn from Garin. Aimar's followers and as many Castel-Noir men as could crowd into hall, came, too, to listen.

Three days went by. On the morning of the fourth farewells were made. Garin and Aimar passed out of the gate with their following and down the winding road. With Garin was Rainier the

squire, and two or three besides. Foulque and all who might watched them go, took the backward-turning wave of the knights' hands, marked them until they vanished in the fir wood. Foulque went back to hall and began to day-dream of Garin and that fief had that been Raimbaut's.

The two knights with their following rode through the spring weather. Very sweet it was, earth and sky more fair than might be told. . . . And so, in the early afternoon, they came in sight of Roche-de-Frêne.

It was holiday and festival. The people upon the road seemed light-hearted. The scarred plain had been helped, and now spring flung over it a mantle of green. When they came to the hill of Roche-de-Frêne the people had thickened about them; when they entered by the western gate the town seemed joyous. The folk were abroad and there was to be made out laughter and singing. As they rode through the streets they met again and yet again, and at last continually, recognition. It had a nature that might please the knightliest knight! The marvel of the cathedral rose before them, and the gold of the sunshine and the sweetness of the air took from it a shading of awfulness but gave in return benignancy. They mounted the high street, and now the mighty shape of the castle increased. Sunlight wrapped it, too, and above was the stair of the sky. Black Tower and Eagle Tower, Red Tower and Lion Tower and White Tower — and Garin saw the tree-tops of the garden. . . . They crossed the moat, en-

tered between Red Tower and Lion Tower. Trumpets were being sounded. Here, too, seemed festival. They dismounted in the outer court — men of rank came about them with the fairest welcome — they were marshalled soon to a rich lodging. Nones were ringing, the spring afternoon slipping away.

An hour passed, another was half run. Garin of the Golden Island, alone save for Rainier in the room that had been given him, heard the knock at the door. "Let him in," he said to the squire, and Pierol entered. The page gave his message. "Sir Garin de Castel-Noir, the princess rests in the garden. She would speak with you there." Garin took his mantle and followed.

In the castle garden the fruit trees were abloom. Their clear shadows lay on the sward while the shadows of the taller trees struck against the enclosing walls. Below the watch-tower there was a sheet of daffodils. The many birds of the garden were singing, and the bees yet hummed in the fruit trees. But there was no gay throng other than these, or other winged things, or the selves of the flowers.

It was quiet in the garden, and at first view it seemed a solitude. Then, as he came toward the heart of it, he saw the princess, seated beneath the great tree about which the garden was built. In the droop and sweep of its boughs had been placed a seat of marble finely wrought. Here she sat, robed in blue, and wearing, held in place by a circlet of gold, a veil threaded with gold and silver. But today it did not hide her face.

As he came near, "Greeting, friend!" she said, and her voice was thrilling music.

Garin would have bent his knee. But, "No!" she said, "do not do that! That is not to be done again between you and me." She rose from the marble seat. She stood in flowing robes, on her head the gold circlet of sovereignty, and she looked a mighty princess, knowing her own mind, guiding her own action, freeing her own spirit, unlocking always new treasures of power and love! She came close to him, stood equal with him. Their eyes met, and if the princess sat in hers, the prince sat in his. "Do you know why I have brought you here?" she said: "I have brought you here, Garin of the Golden Island, to ask you if you will marry me?"

. . . In midsummer, on the Eve of Saint John, they were wed in the cathedral, with great music, pomp, and joy. Afterwards they knelt before the shrine of Our Lady of Roche-de-Frêne, and there were people who said that it was then that the Blessed Image's lips moved and there issued the words "Peace and Happiness." Going, the two passed the pillars raised by Gaucelm of the Star, and coming to the tomb of Gaucelm the Fortunate laid flowers there. . . . But when their own long reign closed, their land held them in memory as Audiart and Garin the Wise.

THE END